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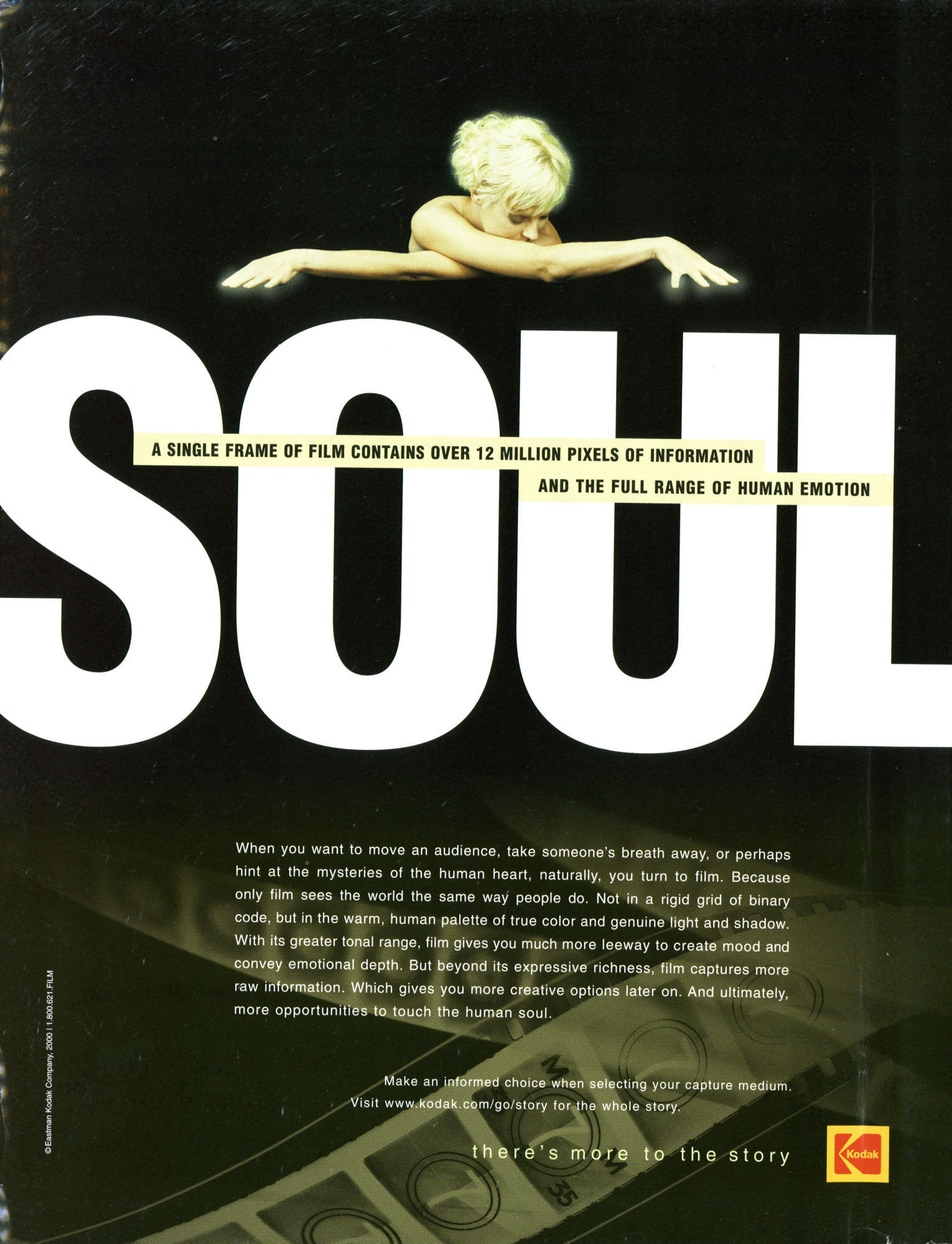
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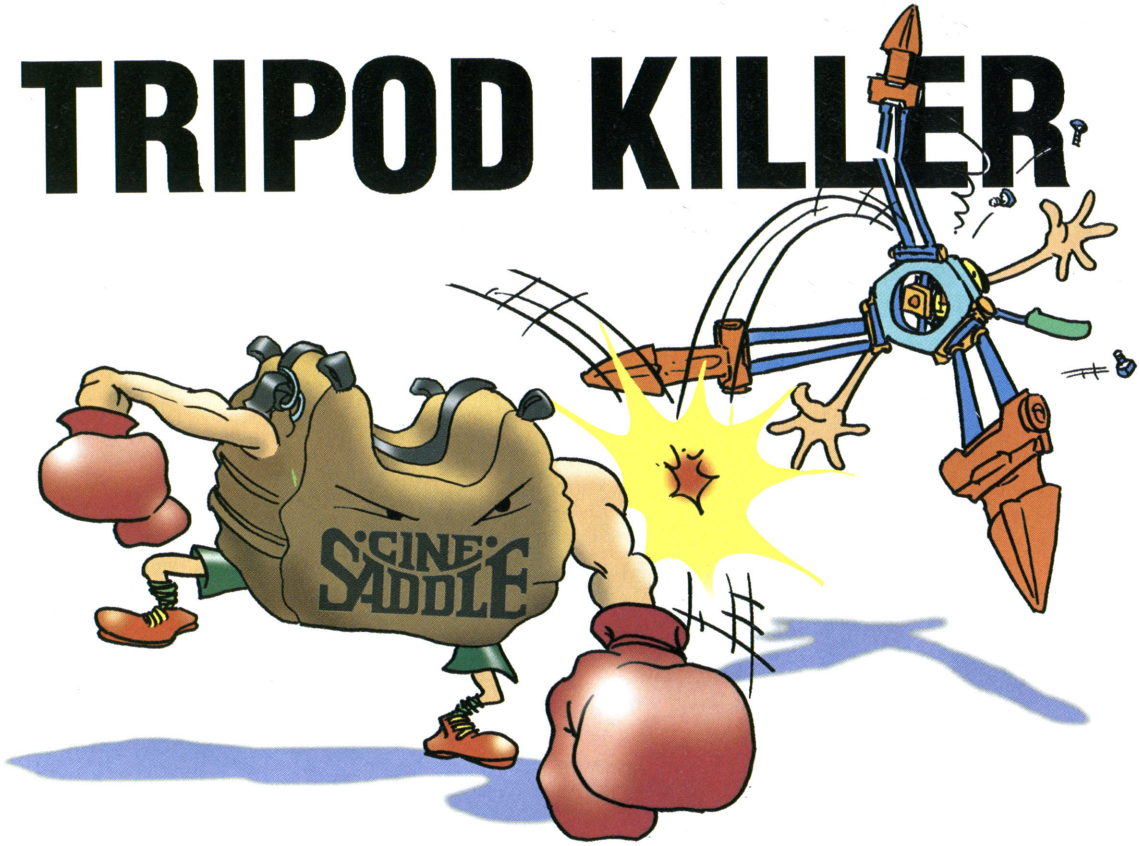

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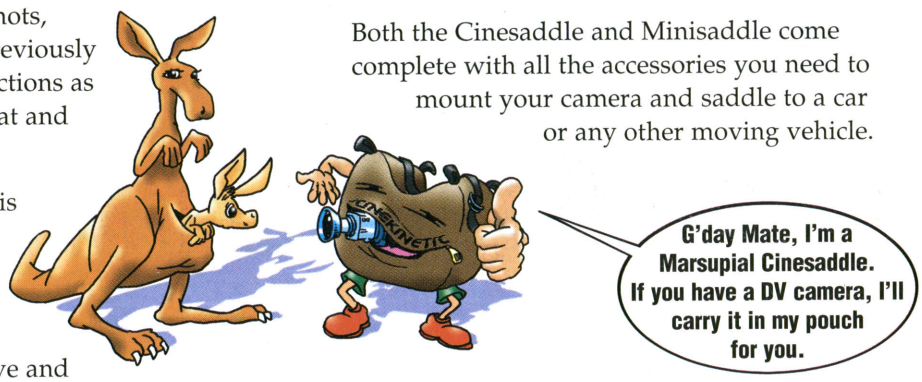

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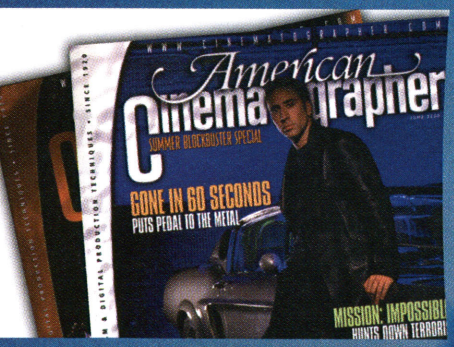

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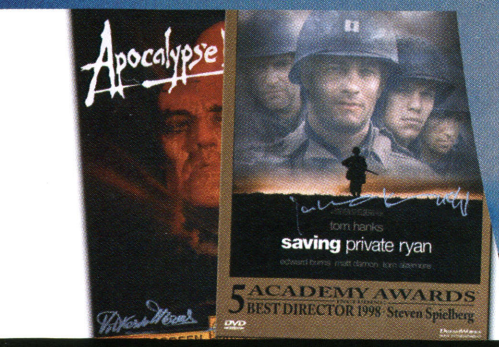

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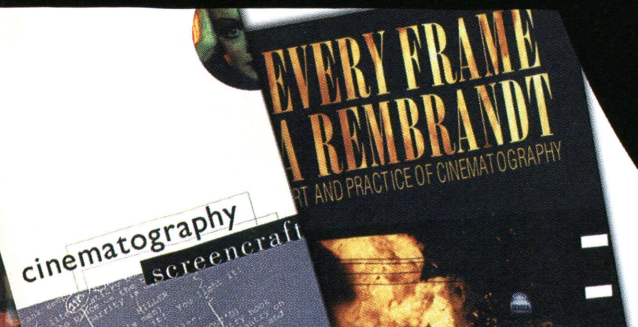

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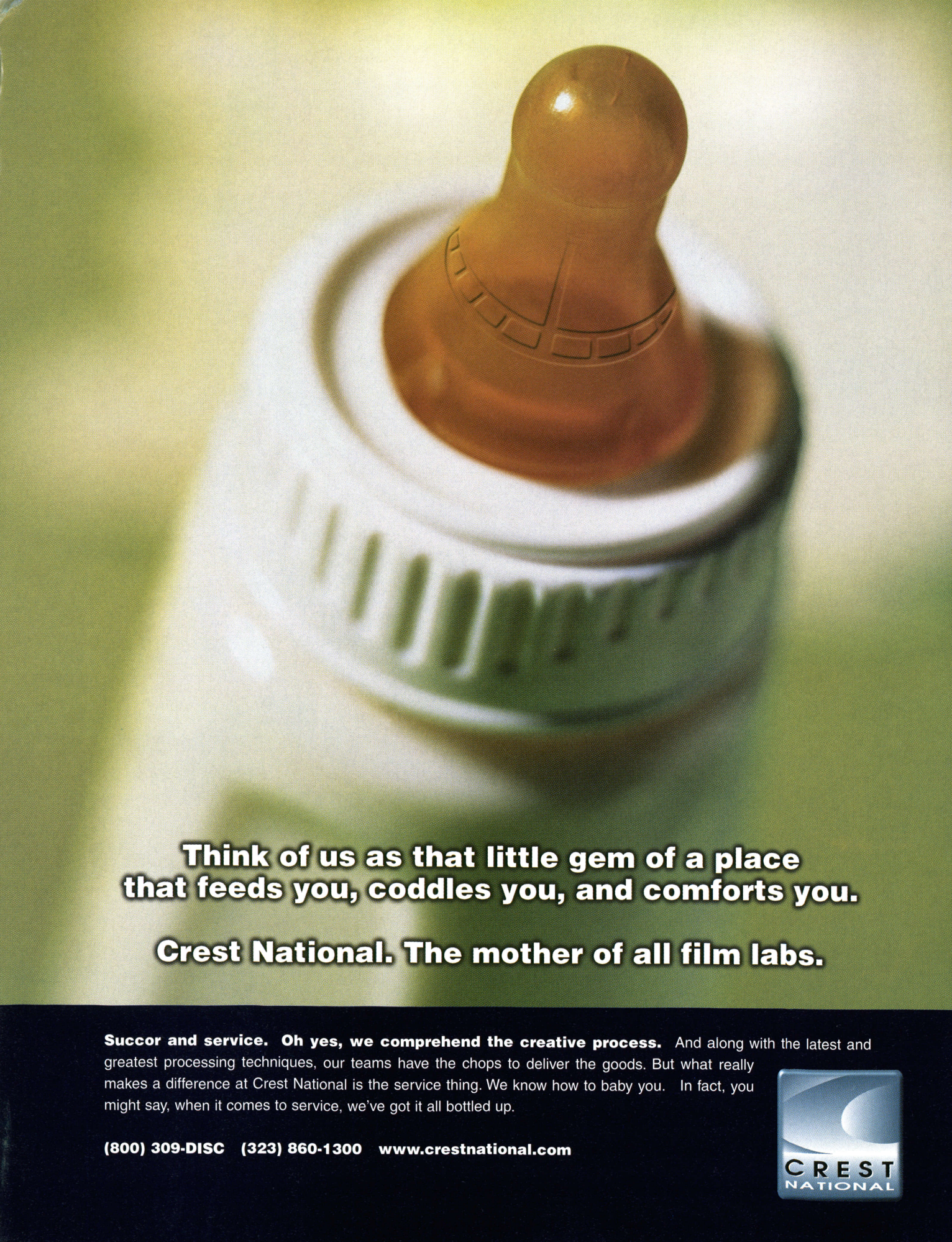
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The Grinch (Jim Carrey) schemes to stop his least favorite holiday in *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, directed by Ron Howard and photographed by Donald Peterman, ASC (photo by Ron Batzdorff, courtesy of Universal Pictures).

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Jay Holben
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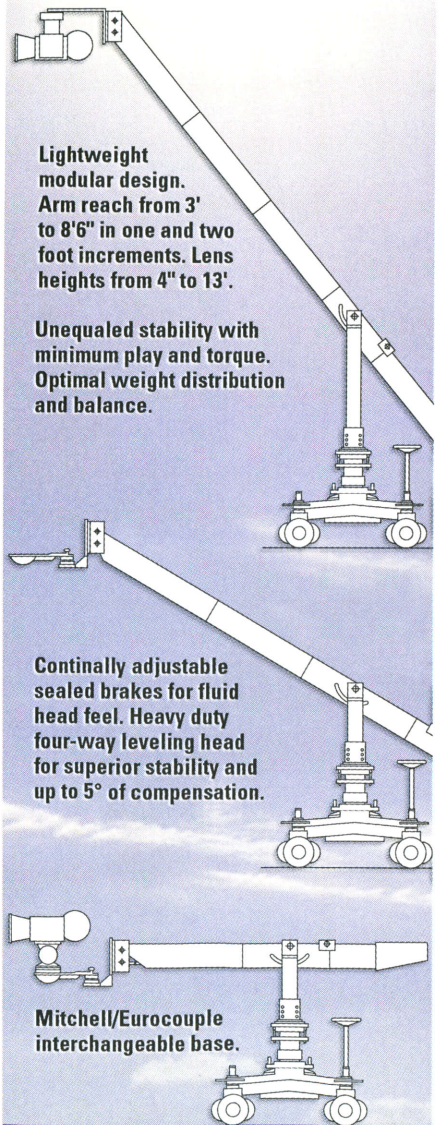

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November 2000 Vol. 81, No. 11
The International Journal of Film & Digital Production Techniques • Since 1920

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American Cinematographer (ISSN 0002-7928) established 1920 in 81st year of publication is published monthly in Hollywood by ASC Holding Corp., 1782 N. Orange Dr., Hollywood, CA 90028, U.S.A., **(800) 448-0145, (323) 969-4333, Fax (323) 876-4973, direct line for subscription inquiries (323) 969-4344. Subscriptions:** U.S. $40; Canada/Mexico $60; all other foreign countries $75 a year (remit international Money Order or other exchange payable in U.S. $). **Advertising:** Rate card upon request from Hollywood office. **Article Reprints:** Request for 100 or more high-quality article reprints should be made to **Reprint Management Services** at **(717) 560-2001.** Copyright 2000 ASC Holding Corp. (All rights reserved.) Periodicals postage paid at Los Angeles, CA and at additional mailing offices. Printed in the USA.
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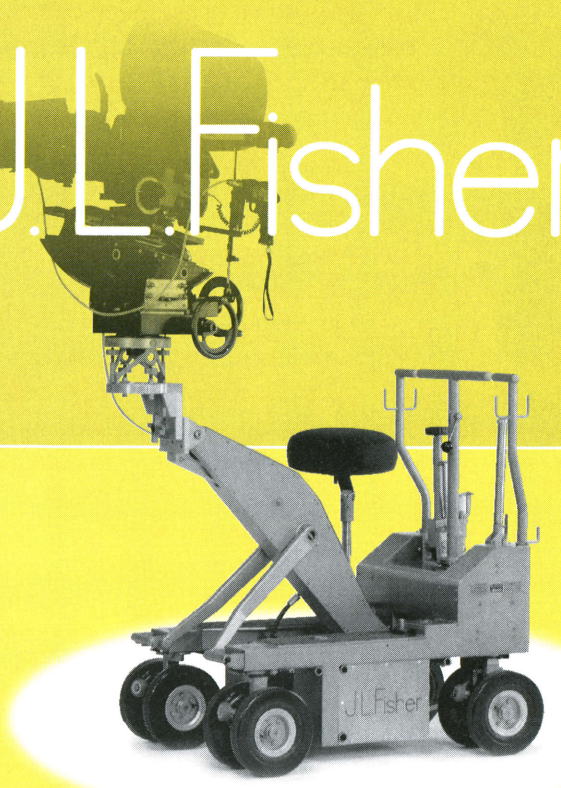

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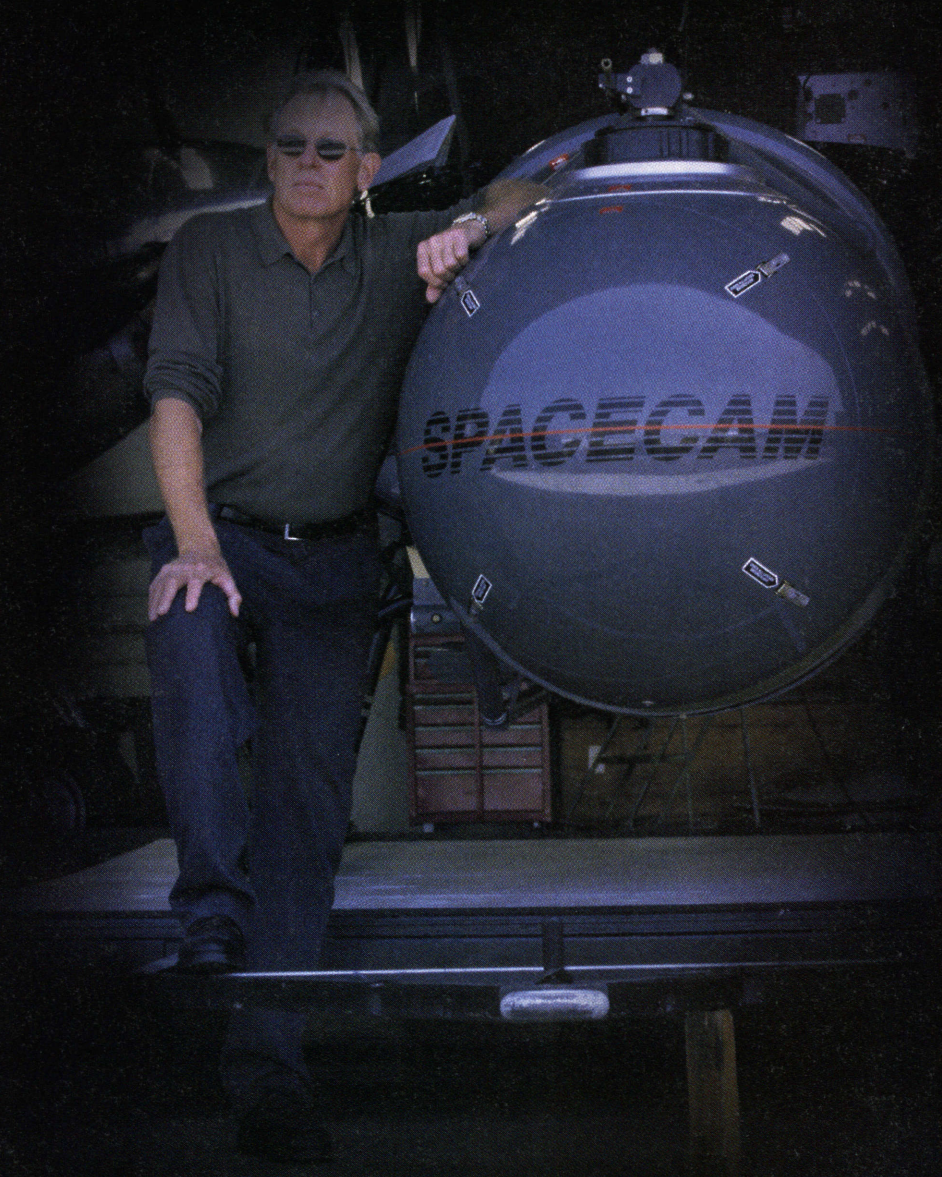

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An Exciting Discovery

When Isco-Optic GMBH came out with its new Specimagine® lens, we were naturally intrigued by the possibilities. And after extensive testing, we're convinced they are a "must" for many situations —especially tabletop commercial work. It's truly an exciting new development!

Excellent Versatility

The Specimagine® Long Distance Macro Lens is a modular system consisting of an optical basic module and five attachment lenses. These will provide a magnification range of 0.3x to 10x (you find that kind of multiplication on a microscope!), with a working distance of 2000mm (about 6.5 feet) to 48mm (about 2 inches). At a 24" range you have the 1:1 image common to most Macro lenses —but from a much farther distance.

Outstanding Optical Quality

It's important to note that the optical quality of these lenses is excellent. We've done a little test, shooting an ordinary dime, using the Specimagine® module and three of its attachment lenses (standard, CF2 and CF4). The old adage of "a picture is worth a thousand words" pretty much applies here.

All The Right Features

Other technical features of the Isco-Optic Long Distance Macro Lense include provisions for two filters, mounting compatibility with most 35mm and 16mm film cameras, and an aperture range from T22 to T64. The lens is compact and lightweight, measuring about 14" long and weighing just over 3 lbs.

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We're confident that when you use this versatile lens package it will expand your creative horizons and deliver footage that is superior to what's possible using ordinary Macro lenses. Best of all, you'll have many more lighting options because you can operate from longer distances. And with T-stops all the way to T64, the depth of field can be exceptional. We predict that the Specimagine® Long Distance Macro Lens will enable cinematographers to establish new standards for production quality. We invite you to investigate the possibilities for yourself.

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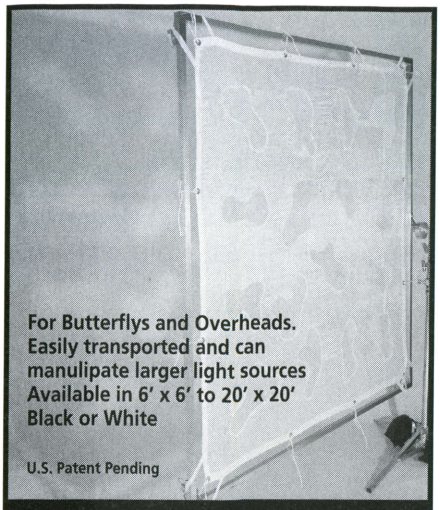

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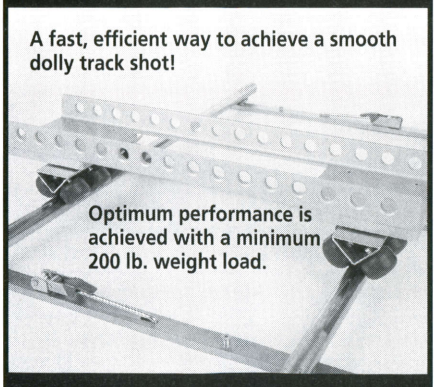

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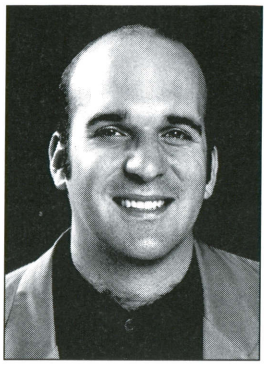


Everyone who celebrates Christmas has a favorite fictional character who best exemplifies the spirit of the season. For those of you with sunny dispositions, that figure is probably Santa Claus. For curmudgeons like myself, though, no one holds a candle to the Grinch. Given the rampant commercialization of Christmas and all of the attendant hoopla, my kind vows annually to undermine the whole foolish ritual, even as our cheery, Who-like associates try to bribe us into compliance with an endless assault of carols and fruitcakes. Naturally, the invariable effect of these Yuletide interventions is that we cranks undergo a last-minute change of heart — just like Mr. Grinch.

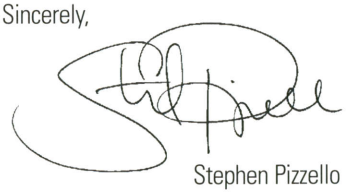
In years past, Grinch fans everywhere have gotten their fix via Chuck Jones's classic animated special, which airs just after the wreaths and mistletoe begin to appear. This time around, however, we can all enjoy *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* on the big screen, with Jim Carrey in the title role. Director Ron Howard's ambitious take on the Dr. Seuss tale was photographed by Don Peterman, ASC, whose crew toiled away within 10 different Universal soundstages during production. Both Peterman ("He's a Mean One," page 38) and Howard ("Staying True to Seuss," page 50) have given *AC* detailed accounts of their experiences on this fanciful project.

The Yards, on the other hand, is grounded in hard-hitting reality. Director James Gray and cinematographer Harris Savides, ASC broke down their approach to this moody New York drama for writer Jay Holben, whose piece on the film ("Switching Tracks," page 60) includes several of the cameraman's detailed reference photos.

This month's issue also features special coverage of commercials and music videos created by top filmmaking teams. Our commercial pieces detail striking new spots for Sprite ("Pop Culture," page 84) and Bacardi ("Members Only," page 92), while our video coverage examines artful clips by Hammer & Tongs ("Low-Tech Brilliance," page 88) and Mike Mills ("High Concepts," page 96).

Last but certainly not least, we've also profiled this year's Emmy Award-nominated cinematographers ("Televisionaries," page 70), who once again managed to raise the bar for small-screen imagery.

Sincerely,



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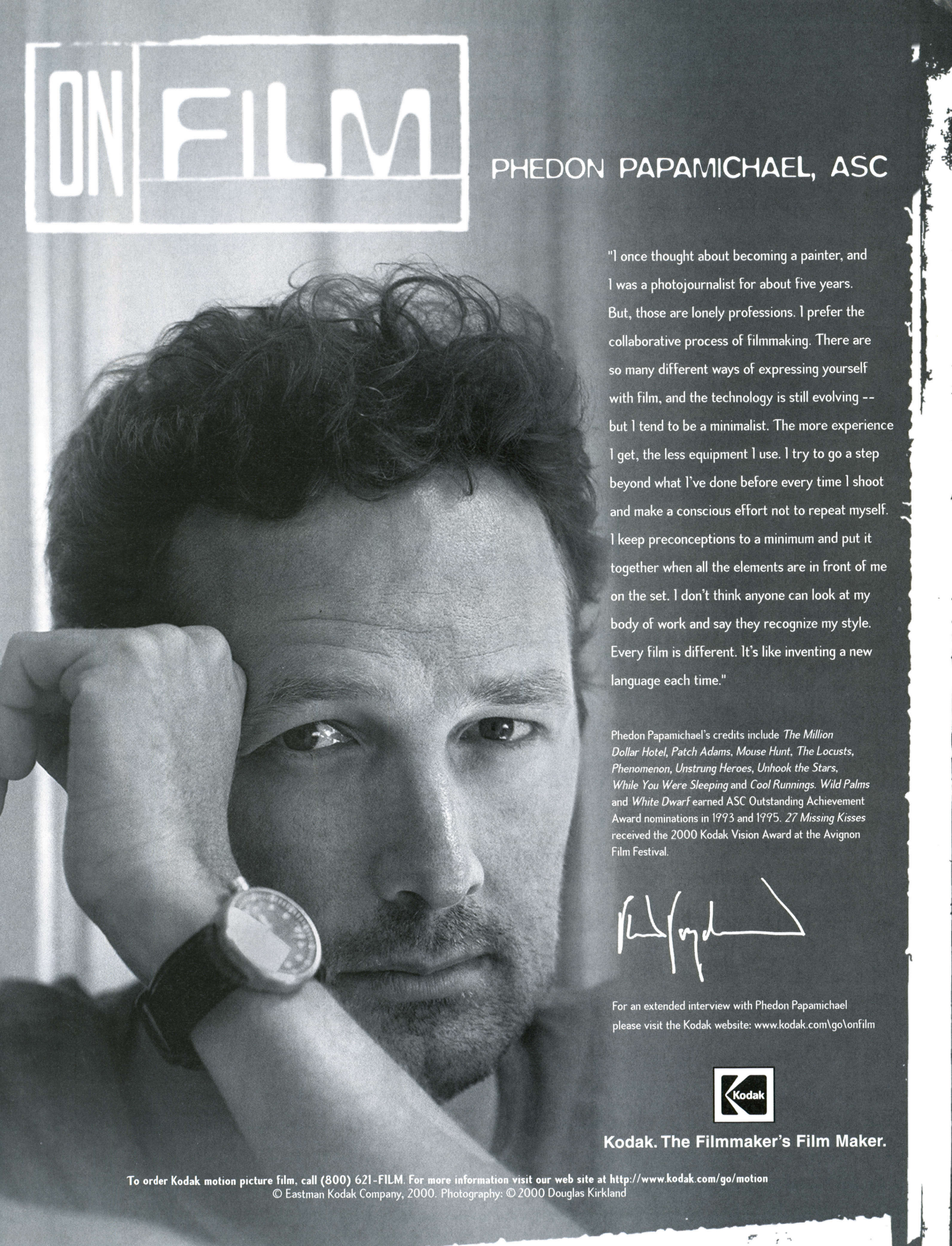
ON FILM
PHEDON PAPAMICHAEL, ASC
"I once thought about becoming a painter, and I was a photojournalist for about five years. But, those are lonely professions. I prefer the collaborative process of filmmaking. There are so many different ways of expressing yourself with film, and the technology is still evolving -- but I tend to be a minimalist. The more experience I get, the less equipment I use. I try to go a step beyond what I've done before every time I shoot and make a conscious effort not to repeat myself. I keep preconceptions to a minimum and put it together when all the elements are in front of me on the set. I don't think anyone can look at my body of work and say they recognize my style. Every film is different. It's like inventing a new language each time."
Phedon Papamichael's credits include *The Million Dollar Hotel, Patch Adams, Mouse Hunt, The Locusts, Phenomenon, Unstrung Heroes, Unhook the Stars, While You Were Sleeping* and *Cool Runnings. Wild Palms* and *White Dwarf* earned ASC Outstanding Achievement Award nominations in 1993 and 1995. *27 Missing Kisses* received the 2000 Kodak Vision Award at the Avignon Film Festival.
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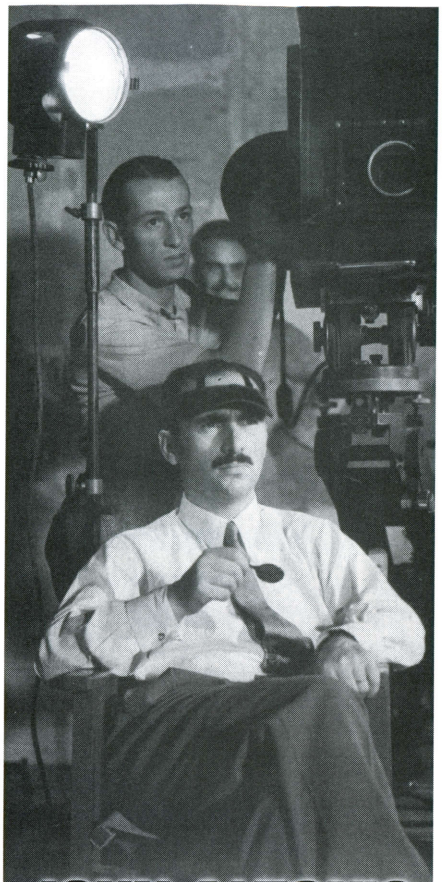

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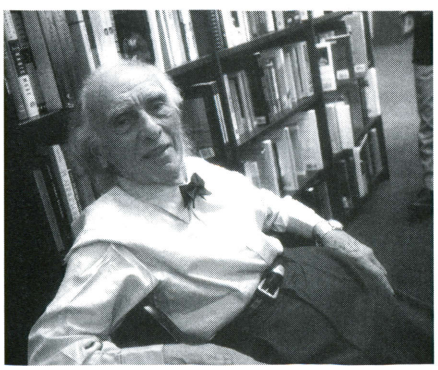

Letters

A Brief History of a Rented Space

Picking a nit or two, there's an error in the August issue's Living Pictures [page 125] about the Vitagraph.

Smith and Blackton's first studio was not in Brooklyn. Their tiny attic office was on the top, [or] 13th, floor of the Morse Building (owned by a Mr. Niles) on the corner of Beekman and Nassau in Manhattan — occupied mostly by struggling newspaper artists and cartoonists. They paid $10 a month for it.

Their first production there, shot on the roof on May 16, 1897, [was] titled *The Burglar on the Roof,* and [was] shown the next night at Tony Pastor's on 14th Street to great acclaim.

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— Roy Fowler
U.K.

Ray Zone responds: You are correct. Smith and Blackton's first studio at the Morse Building was in Manhattan, not Brooklyn. Your information seems to have come from Albert Smith's autobiography Two Reels and a Crank *(Doubleday & Co.: 1952), the accuracy of which film historian Charles Musser questioned in a 1980 paper titled "The American Vitagraph, 1897-1901." Musser examined the lease that was signed by Blackton and Smith on December 22, 1897, for a 14-month rental of Room 90 on the 90th floor of the Morse Building. This calls into question Smith's diary entry of May 16, 1897, for production of* A Burglar on the Roof, *which Musser, citing a playbill, shows playing at Proctor's Pleasure Palace on October 3, 1898.*

Thank you for your letter. It is nice to know that subscribers to American Cinematographer *are reading Living Pictures.*

Crain Mutiny

Several other eagle-eyed readers noticed a rather humbling error in the July installment of Books in Review, in which Ray Zone chastises the author of *The Directors, Take One* for misspelling a number of names. The text of the review notes that "Jeanne Craine's surname appears as Crane." However, as film buffs know, the actress's surname is actually spelled Crain! This error should be attributed to bleary-eyed staffers, because Ray's original text did not include the "incorrect" correction. Somewhere along the line, that pesky "e" reappeared, much to our chagrin....

We Don't Know Jack?

Due to an incorrect press release, our August article on *Croupier* ("Dealer's Hand," p. 26) stated that the film was originally commissioned by Britain's Channel Four, when it was actually commissioned and partially funded by Film Four, an independent feature-film company. The film's reps also took issue with the statement that the film received "mixed reviews" in England.

Lost Souls On ASC Web Site

AC's December 1999 coverage of *Lost Souls,* which opened last month in theaters throughout the U.S., can now be re-read on the ASC's Web site (www.cinematographer.com). The supernatural horror film marks the directorial debut of Academy Award-winning cinematographer Janusz Kaminski, ASC, who is currently shooting the science-fiction epic *A.I.* for longtime collaborator Steven Spielberg.

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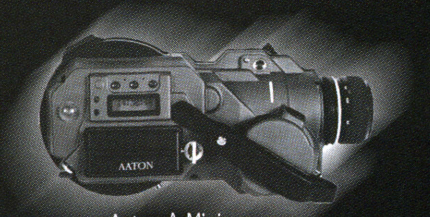

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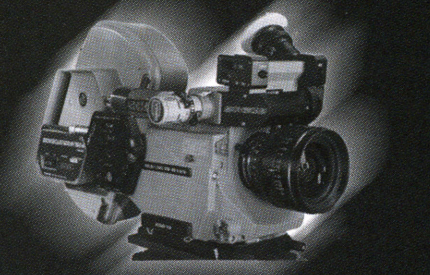

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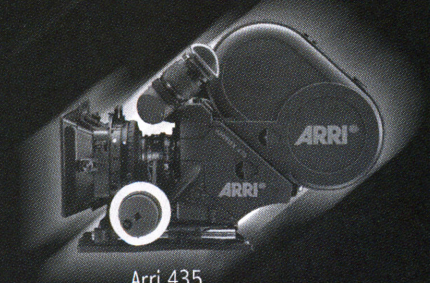

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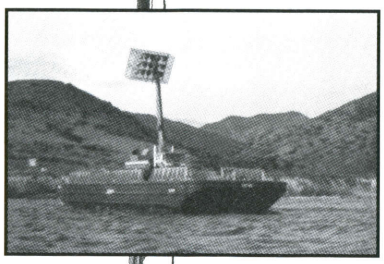

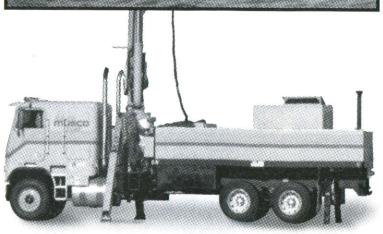

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The Post Process

A Changing Landscape for Telecine

by Debra Kaufman

Because nearly every post facility in North America houses at least one Cintel telecine, it came as a shock to the industry when Cintel International announced in July that parent company Image Precision International had put Cintel up for sale. Long the leader in telecine machines, Cintel's dominance had been shaken when Philips and Kodak, who had combined their expertise, debuted the Spirit DataCine. Cintel later came out with its own HD/data telecine, the C-Reality (see "New Products," *AC* July '00), but it has thus far failed to create the same level of momentum as the company's past products, including the very popular URSA Diamond.

Though Cintel management has announced a buyout and the company has stated its commitment to continuing operations and servicing its hundreds of telecine machines, the company's current instability is bound to make some post house owners nervous.

The situation also makes the climate ripe for competition. In addition to Philips and Sony, Innovation TK (ITK) is emerging as another serious contender in the telecine market. ITK was founded in 1994 as a provider of tools to enhance the Cintel URSA. ITK's Twigi, Scand'al and Y-Front put the U.K. company on the map; ITK states that two-thirds of the Cintel URSAs incorporate an ITK Twigi, which significantly expands the URSA's tube life.

With these products well-known in the marketplace, ITK already had a loyal following when it debuted its own telecine, the Millennium Machine, in a first, not-quite-finished version at IBC '99 and, more definitively, at NAB 2000. The Millennium Machine switches from 525, 625, 720p, 1080i and any resolution up to 2K. Two upcoming options to be introduced at NAB 2001 will enable the Millennium to transfer at 4K resolution and to handle 65mm and 70mm film, including large formats such as 15-perf.

"The Millennium incorporates a whole range of front-end innovations designed to deliver the highest quality signal to the telecine's electronics," reports ITK co-founder Stuart Hunt, a former Cintel engineer. "The White Lightning CRT incorporates a broadband light output and fast decay rates to produce quieter images and reduced afterglow. Its curved surface square tube is uniquely optimized for the shape of the film."

The Millennium's new lens, designed by Barry Johnson (who also designed "the successful part of NASA's Hubble telescope lens"), involves 10 differing pieces of glass, making it both apochromatic, to ensure perfect focus in all three colors, and telecentric, to ensure that light hits the film at the correct angle of incidence.

The lens and tube work with the Y-Front cellbox, which, placed directly above the gate, cuts the light path to a minimum. Its design allows it to collect all of the light and collimate it to ensure that even light bounced from scratches is picked up and delivered to the 4" photomultiplier tubes which, says Hunt, have twice the quantum efficiency of previous telecine photo-multipliers.

The Millennium includes a six-vector secondary color-correction system providing 16-bit processing that is 4x oversampled within the telecine in order to bring out hues, saturation and luminance without introducing noise. Near-pin registration provides real-time stability in all film formats; a pin-registration

bogen

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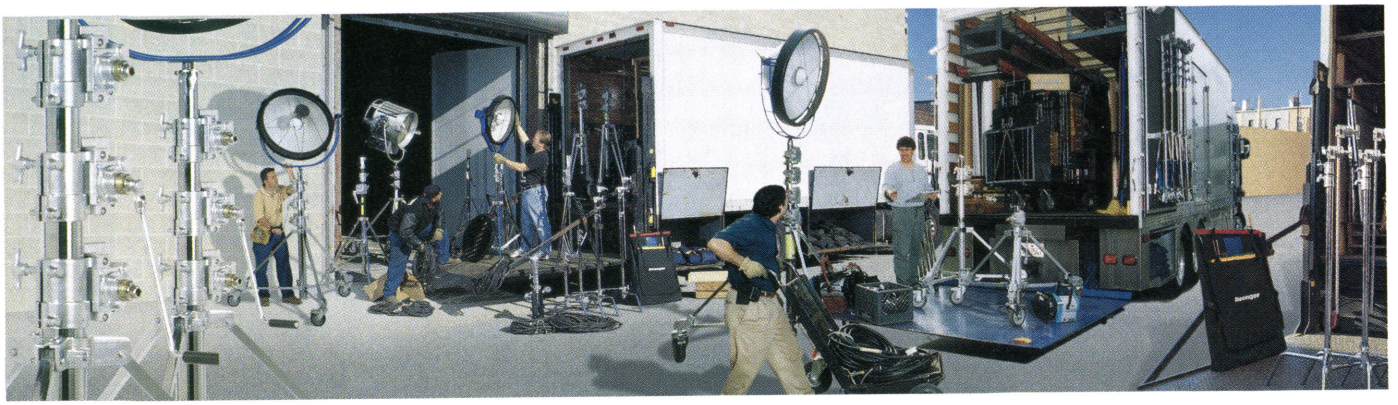

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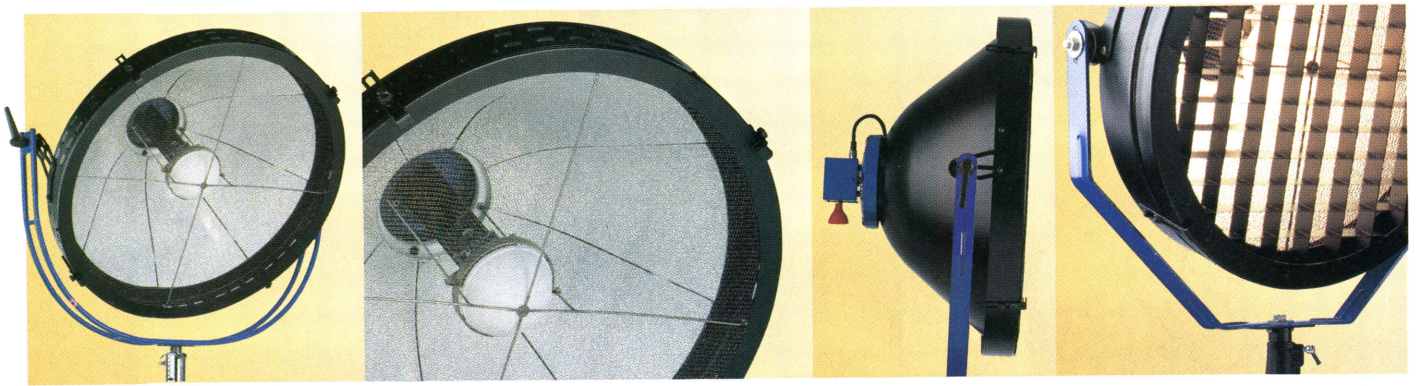

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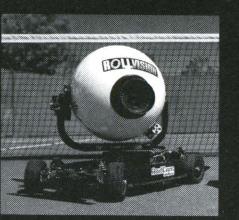

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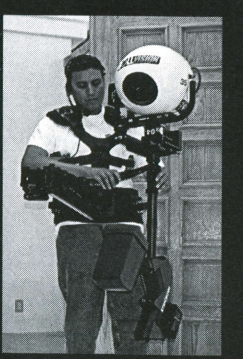

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system is available for high-res effects. The Millennium works with both the Da Vinci 2K and Pandora Pogle Megadeth.

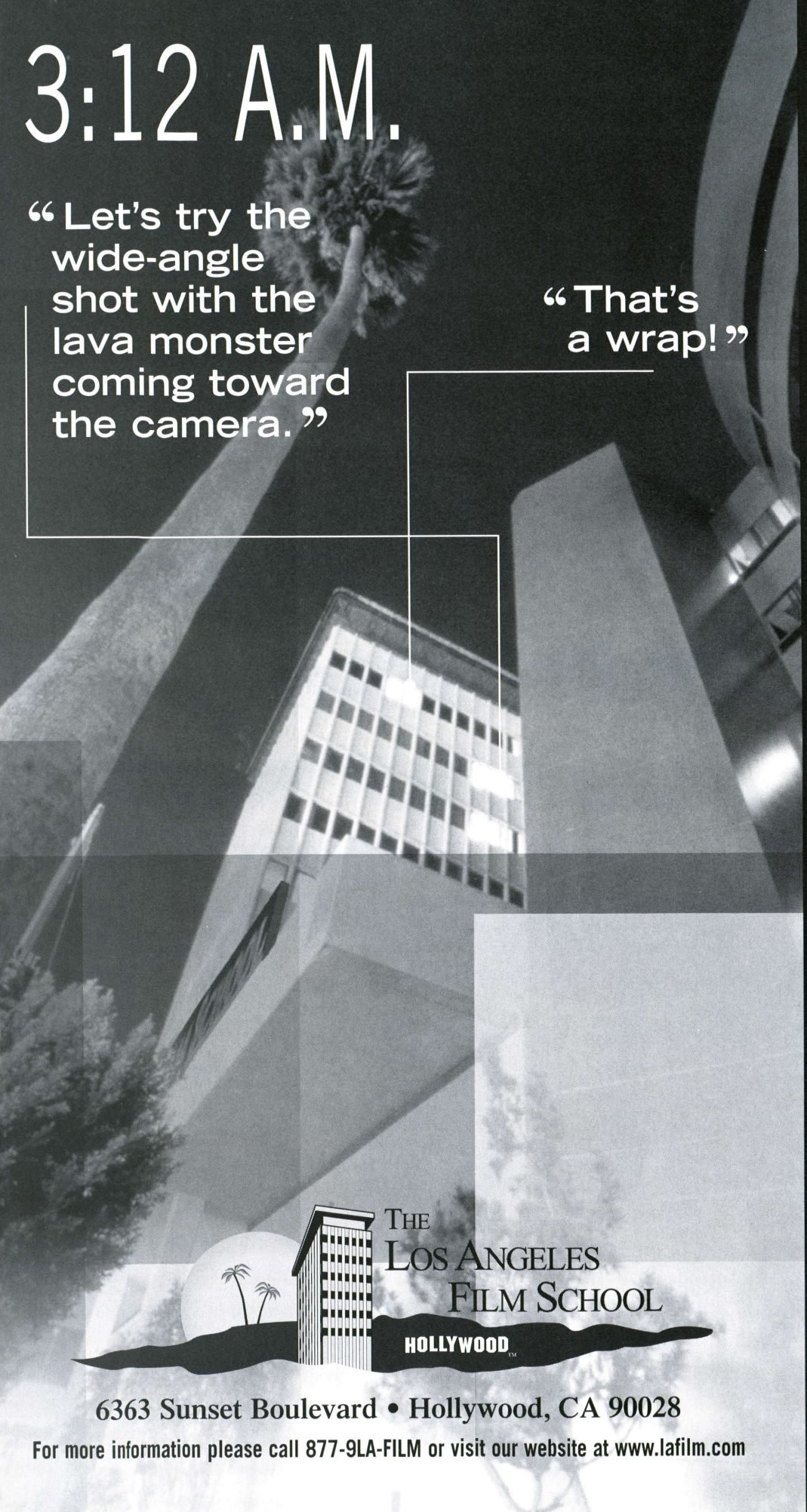
According to Hunt, the same features, speeds and resolutions available with 35mm and 16mm formats will be in force when transferring 70mm film: up to 2K in real-time, and non-real-time resolutions as high as 4096x4096 with the upcoming 4K option. The scanning system supports the same zooms, pans, rotatations and other scan effects expected, and the video processing performs the same real-time aperture, primary and secondary color-corrections.

At IBC 2000, ITK also rechristened its High Definition Y-Front upgrade system as Millennium Lite, which will offer an HD upgrade path to customers with existing Cintel URSAs, with 2K resolution scanning in real time and maximum optional 4K resolution.

After the debut of the Millennium Machine, Cintel brought litigation under its policy of protecting and asserting its intellectual property rights. That suit was recently settled out of court, with the patent in issue to be assigned to Cintel and a paid-up license taken by ITK, for an undisclosed sum.

Five Millennium Machines and four Millennium Lites are currently operating in facilities worldwide, and ITK has many pending purchase orders. The company enjoyed three majors sales at this fall's IBC: Millennium Machines were bought by New York's Post Perfect and Australia's Digital Post Auckland, while India's Famous Studios in Bombay bought a Millennium Lite. The first installed Millennium Machine debuted in January 2000 at Pacific Data Post, the new Santa Monica post facility opened by Neil Fedman of Dallas-based Video Post & Transfer, in partnership with colorist Steve Behar. Pacific Data Post will offer film-to-digital video transfer on all high-end formats, including HDTV, 2K data and 4K data output, as well as special-effects creation and editing.

At IBC 2000, ITK also announced new sales of the Millennium Machine to the U.S. Army, FotoKem in Burbank and facilities in New Zealand. ■



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DVD Playback

by Chris Pizzello

Nashville (1975)
2.35:1 (16 x 9 Enhanced),
Dolby Digital 5.1
Paramount, $29.98

Spurred on by the relative creative freedom of the '70s, director Robert Altman was obviously in an ambitious frame of mind when he set out to make *Nashville,* now generally regarded as one of the great American films of the era. The director trained his camera on two dozen winners, losers, watchers and power brokers during a bustling weekend in the country-music capital, aiming for no less than a definitive study of American mores and values at the 200-year mark in the country's history. It's a decidedly offbeat, unsentimental portrait that ends on a note of crushing cynicism.

Employing a sly, unobtrusive visual style, improvisations from his actors, and a unique multi-microphone setup (which records cast members even when they're not aware of it), Altman is a cinematic innovator whose great gift is his uncanny ability to capture the offhand, disjointed rhythms of real life. In his commentary on the DVD, Altman continually praises the fast, documentary-like work of cinematographer Paul Lohmann, who had to adapt to constant location changes around Nashville.

The DVD transfer of *Nashville* is hardly pristine. The images generally sport accurate colors and decent sharpness, but there are some noticeable age artifacts, a consistent lack of shadow detail and occasional, annoying flickering. (One should remember, however, that *Nashville* is 25 years old.) The disc also features a re-edited Dolby Digital 5.1 soundtrack, which helps somewhat in discerning the half-audible (but terribly important) background chatter that is Altman's trademark. The English subtitles function adds further clarity by highlighting this dialogue in italics.

Extras include the amazingly concise trailer (which introduces **all** of the film's 24 characters) and a short Altman interview segment juiced up with scenes from the film. The feature is informative but unnecessary because Altman addresses most of the same issues in his breezy, somewhat detached commentary. The director doesn't offer many insights on the film's themes and complexities, which is probably intentional, considering his determinedly non-manipulative filmmaking style. The multi-layered *Nashville* presents a welcome challenge to the viewer's own powers of interpretation.

Magnolia (1999)
2.40:1 (16 x 9 Enhanced),
Dolby Digital 5.1
and Dolby Surround 2.0
New Line Platinum Series,
$29.98

Paul Thomas Anderson's *Magnolia,* a feast of Los Angeles dysfunction, drew a lot of comparisons to *Nashville,* but the similarities are only structural. Like Altman's film, *Magnolia* juggles a complex web of interconnected characters over a short but intense time frame. Anderson possesses none of Altman's cynicism, however, showering even his seemingly rancid characters with understanding and sympathy. While earning quite a few critical raves, *Magnolia* was also met in some quarters with startlingly passionate derision — probably because its nakedly earnest tone and heightened emotions are so out of step with our current age of ironic detachment. While the film probably would have benefitted from a heavier hand in the editing room (as Anderson admits in one of the DVD supplements, "Final cut is a scary thing to give to a guy like me!")

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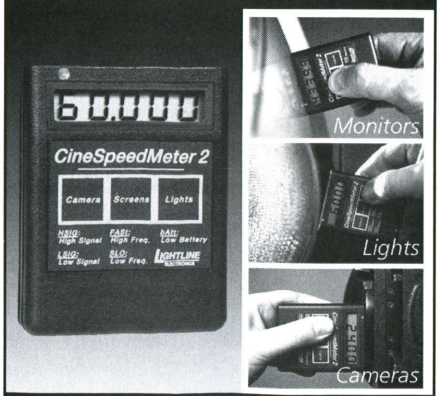

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and a slightly less hysterical pitch in a few of the performances, these are mistakes of passion and ambition — in other words, the best kind.

New Line's DVD perfectly captures cinematographer Robert Elswit's super-saturated and highly contrasty images, which must have made for a difficult transfer. Elswit's vibrant colors and Anderson's whip-smart camera moves and edits lend vitality to a film that could have easily become bogged down in its characters' unending parade of misery.

The extras, featured on a second disc, are surprisingly modest considering the "New Line Platinum Series" tag. How did the gregarious Anderson resist recording a director's commentary? In lieu of that, New Line has included an hour-long documentary by Mark Rance, who was given free reign by Anderson to shoot the film's entire journey, from early crew screenings of films such as *Network,* through painstaking rehearsals and all the way to Anderson picking up the Golden Bear award at the 2000 Berlin Film Festival.

Also included is a hilarious infomercial featuring Tom Cruise's outrageous messiah of misogyny, Frank "T.J." Mackey, which was seen only in fleeting glimpses in the finished film; a generous helping of trailers and TV spots; and Anderson's clever music video for Mann's Oscar-nominated song "Save Me," for which he assembled the film's cast to appear alongside the ghostlike singer in various settings from the film. For those with a fetish for hidden DVD goodies, fast-forwarding through the color-bar section leads to a series of cast bloopers.

Shane (1953)
1.33:1, Dolby Digital 2.0
Paramount, $29.99

Director Sam Peckinpah called *Shane* the best Western ever made — quite a compliment from the man who made *The Wild Bunch* — and it's not hard to see why. Directed by George Stevens, *Shane* features a shockingly sober take on violence at a time when it wasn't unusual to see screen gunslingers take five slugs at point-blank range and swagger away with nary a limp. Not that *Shane* is lacking in the action department — a wild barroom brawl between homesteaders and rival cattle ranchers remains one of the best ever filmed, while the climactic confrontation between the stoic Shane (Alan Ladd) and the nefarious Wilson (Jack Palance) is an all-time classic. But the real backbone of the film lies in the reactions of young Joey Starett (Brandon De Wilde) to the violence he's witnessing; Stevens cuts to the boy 19 times during the barroom brawl to register the tyke's alternating horror and excitement.

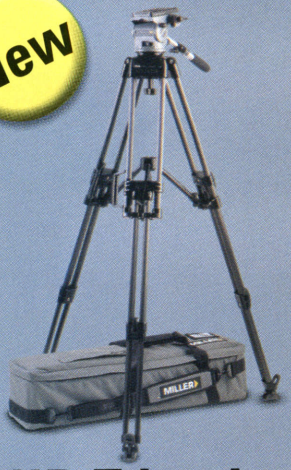
Shane has rightfully been given the royal treatment by Paramount, which restored the negative and soundtrack and made a new video transfer. The results are gorgeous — the richly colorful images photographed by Loyal Griggs, ASC (who collected an Oscar for his work) are remarkably clean, sharp and detailed, with only the rare instance of softness or wear on the negative. Day-for-night scenes have been returned to their properly dark level (compare these to the included trailer, in which "night" scenes look more like high noon), and interiors have been returned to their original look of "Rembrandt sketches."

In addition to the film's old-fashioned trailer, an audio commentary by Stevens' son, George Jr. (who worked on the film as a production assistant), and *Shane* associate producer Ivan Moffat is the only supplement on the disc, but it's a good one. Listening to these two articulate and well-prepared Hollywood veterans is sheer film-buff bliss. They generally avoid the usual set stories, instead focusing their insights on the major directorial techniques and themes of *Shane*. Stevens points out that his father put the story in context visually by shooting most of the film with 75mm and 100mm lenses, thus making the surrounding Grand Teton Mountains of Jackson Hole, Wyoming, loom even larger. Moffat suggests that the film's ambiguous attitude toward violence is due to the filmmakers' World War II experiences, which were still fresh in their minds at the time of filming. ■

Arrow 50

Making news, making news

New



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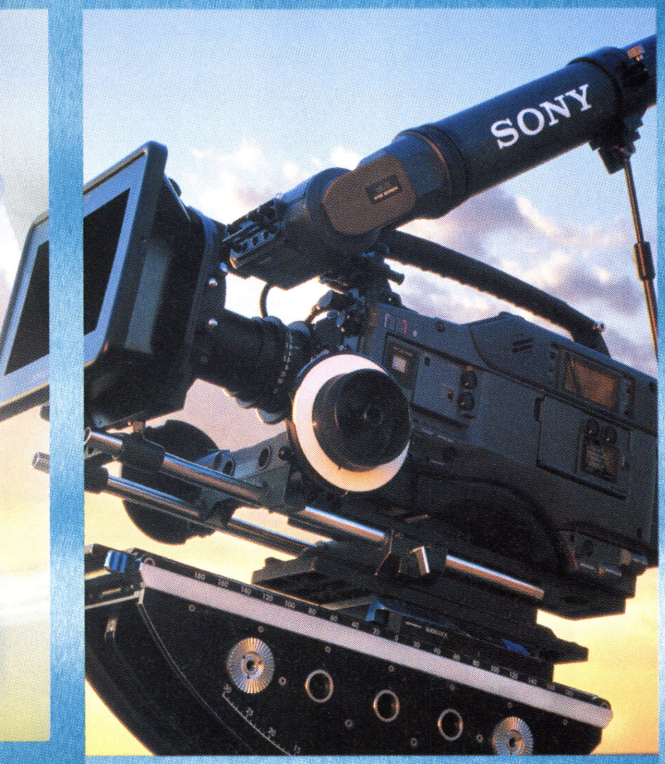

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Production Slate

After spending a strange night in the woods with her friends near Burkittsville, Maryland, college student Erica Leerhsen begins to feel the effects in *Book of Shadows: Blair Witch 2.*

Photos by Abbot Genser, courtesy of Artisan Entertainment

Revisiting Old Haunts

by Rachael K. Bosley

By now, chances are good that you've seen the work of Nancy Schreiber, ASC, perhaps without even knowing it. Film buffs have most likely seen her photography in the documentaries *Visions of Light: The Art of Cinematography* or *A Personal Journey with Martin Scorsese Through American Movies.* Rock 'n' roll fans have probably caught the 1990 *Amnesty International* concert film, for which she followed Bruce Springsteen, Sting, Peter Gabriel and other performers to countries such as Zimbabwe, Greece, India and Brazil. Art-house aficionados might recall her impressionistic images in Temistocles Lopez's *Chain of Desire* (1993) or her starkly forlorn tableaux in Neil LaBute's *Your Friends & Neighbors* (1998; see *AC* Sept. '98). And tourists tripping down Hollywood Boulevard can see her work in *Forever Hollywood*, an hour-long tribute to Tinseltown that plays regularly at the Egyptian Theatre.

This month, you can also go to a local multiplex in any civilized area of the world and find Schreiber's name on at least one screen, thanks to her recent assignment in a small but infamous patch of Maryland woods.

Schreiber traveled to the Baltimore area last winter to shoot *Book of Shadows: Blair Witch 2*, the highly anticipated sequel to last year's runaway hit *The Blair Witch Project* (see *AC* April '99). The production reunited Schreiber with director Joe Berlinger (*Brother's Keeper*, *Paradise Lost: The Child Murders at Robin Hood Hills*), whom she first met in the mid-1980s at Maysles Films in New York; Schreiber was working on her own documentary, *Possum Living*, and Berlinger was an executive producer at the company. Schreiber later photographed several commercials for Berlinger and his partner, Bruce Sinofsky, and they also asked her to do additional photography on their Emmy-nominated documentary *Paradise Lost 2: Revelations* (1999).

Berlinger, who was making his first fictional feature with *Book of Shadows,* felt that Schreiber's diverse skills behind the camera would be invaluable on the $10 million production, not only because the project's visual concept was totally up in the air when he began working on it, but also because of its tight shooting schedule. "Nancy was my first thought," Berlinger attests. "She

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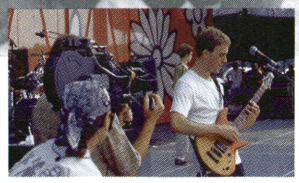

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Pictured from the left, friends Kim Director, Tristen Skyler, Stephen Barker Turner and Jeffrey Donovan argue about the best way to proceed.

would have been my first choice no matter what, but in this case it was particularly because her skills run the gamut from 16mm documentaries to high-end 35mm productions, and I love her lighting. When I began talking to her, I didn't have a visual concept or a finalized script; we could have gone in any direction, and she has a broad base of skills. I was expected to start shooting about two months after I was hired — a ridiculous timetable, particularly for a sequel to the most successful independent movie of all time."

Details about the film's plot were top secret at press time, but Schreiber and Berlinger confirm that *Book of Shadows* departs from almost all of the conventions established in its shot-on-the-fly predecessor — visually as well as narratively. "We wanted to do everything against expectation, so I tried to figure out what people were expecting," Berlinger offers. "I'm known as a cinéma vérité documentarian, so people might be expecting that kind of film. But what they're getting is a richly photographed, dark and mysterious, beautifully lit movie. *Blair Witch* was quite brilliant with the 'found footage' conceit, and we saw no need to duplicate that." He adds that the only convention the sequel borrows from the first film is its use of relatively undiscovered actors who use their own names in the film; this, too, played to one of Schreiber's strengths. "Nancy is a very calm, very nurturing presence on the set," Berlinger says. "We had such a tight schedule, and it was my first movie; I knew she would be good for my own sanity, as well as the sanity of [inexperienced] actors."

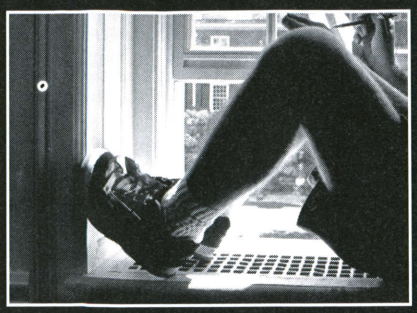
A key decision the filmmakers made was to develop a script that acknowledged the existence and success of the original film. *Book of Shadows* therefore follows five college students who are all big fans of *The Blair Witch Project* and decide to travel to Burkittsville, Maryland — as many of the film's fans did throughout the summer of 1999 — to visit the sites featured in the film. What begins as a happy trip takes a strange turn after the group spends one night in the woods. The amateur filmmaker in the group, Jeffrey Donovan, suggests that the others come stay at his apartment, which is where the rest of the story unfolds.

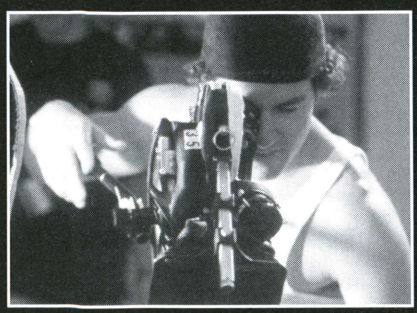
"People [familiar with *Blair Witch Project*] will be surprised by how little of this film takes place in the woods!" Schreiber says with a laugh. Despite that, the cinematographer says that shooting in the forest was surprisingly difficult. "We were just outside of Baltimore, not far from where the first movie was shot. The perfect clearing we found was on top of a hill, and the only access for lighting was downhill from the site," Schreiber recalls. She knew that her primary source for those scenes would have to be a Musco Light; there was a partially paved road downhill and a small clearing in the trees through which the light could be projected. "After it rained, it was touch-and-go as to whether we could extend [the Musco] all the way up so that I could shoot wide without flare. Fortunately, we went full extension, and my gaffer, Jay Kemp, supplemented the three-quarter backlight with an 18K in a Condor to simulate warm campfire light."

The production had to contend with the East Coast's variable winter/spring weather throughout the shoot. "I went to Baltimore in January to scout locations, and I remember trudging along our locations in thigh-high snow, wondering whether it would ever melt in time," Schreiber recalls. "We were shooting from March to early May, so we saw snow turn into rain, and cold turn into spring. Then we had to hurry before the leaves grew on the trees!"

Scenes set in Donovan's living space were filmed in an enormous, abandoned warehouse built into a hill outside of Baltimore. While the crew was relieved to move inside, Schreiber says the location posed a different set of obstacles. "At first, it looked as though we'd have to shoot a month of night-for-night, because there was a [noisy] machine shop operating during the day about 200 feet from where we were shooting," she says. "Shooting at night would have been really hard on everyone." Fortunately, the shop owner agreed to a temporary shutdown, and the grips were able to tent the enormous windows in the warehouse to facilitate day-for-night shooting. "It was a challenging location for key grip Sean Crowell, because the building was on a hill over a creek, and the 40-foot windows were 30 feet off the ground and had to be tented over water," Schreiber notes. "But it worked out perfectly."

The cinematographer used big soft sources such as HMIs for the daytime scenes in the warehouse (which weren't tented). As darkness falls in the film, the lighting pattern becomes much more mysterious and increasingly moody. "There was an additional loft space within the loft apartment, a partial second floor, which functioned as Donovan's work space," Schreiber details. "It was about eight feet off the





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Right: Cinematographer Nancy Schreiber, ASC sets up a shot on location in the woods near Baltimore, Maryland. Below: Schreiber confers with director Joe Berlinger. The two began collaborating on projects about 15 years ago, and Berlinger says Schreiber was his first choice when he signed on to direct *Book of Shadows*.

ground. Its floor was made of metal grating, so we could underlight from below and create delineated shadows, and we could also light downstairs shots from above, creating striped patterns on faces."

The ceiling in the work space was so low that Schreiber asked production designer Vince Perranio to incorporate funky, rust-colored track lighting into his plan, and the crew used its own bulbs to create strong enough illumination. The rest of the building's ceilings were incredibly high, and gaffer Kemp used a range of tungsten lights to illuminate the area, including Source 4 Lekos, Peppers, Dedo lights, and large and small Mole-Richardson Fresnels. He also used Par cans in the building's long hallways.

According to Berlinger, an active camera is the cornerstone of his visual strategy for *Book of Shadows*, and Schreiber confirms that the film features extensive Steadicam work in the woods (courtesy of operator Ross Judd) as well as the warehouse (courtesy of Scott Sakamoto). Berlinger asked Schreiber and the cast to watch his three favorite thrillers — *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Shining* and *Jacob's Ladder* — and he says that the "very active and very steady camera" in *The Shining* was the primary influence on *Book of Shadows*' camerawork. In keeping with that plan, Schreiber chose the Panavision Millennium as her A-camera because of its easy conversion to Steadicam and its ramping capabilities. Her B-camera in the woods was an Aaton 35, which was used for handheld and Steadicam work; once the production moved indoors, however, the Aaton "was a bit too noisy for dialogue," according to Schreiber, so she used the Millennium for handheld and Steadicam shots, as well as a Panaflex for B-camera work.

Despite the rather cramped confines of Donovan's workspace, Schreiber wanted to be able to shoot it with a moving camera, so key grip Crowell built a steel platform about 6' high and 64' long to facilitate Technocrane shots. "Unfortunately, many of the crane moves were abbreviated or eliminated during the final edit," Schreiber says. The cinematographer used Primo primes and Primo (11:1 and 4:1) zooms throughout the shoot, noting, "There is a definite shift in the look of the film as the story progresses, with more handheld work toward the end."

Quite unlike its predecessor, *Book of Shadows* was photographed almost entirely on 35mm color film — Kodak Vision 500T 5279, Vision 250D 5246 for day interiors and late-afternoon exteriors, and EXR 5248 for day exteriors. Schreiber says her camera assistants were "wonderful" Baltimore technicians, headed by 1st AC Boots Shelton. "In fact, most of the crew were alumni of *Homicide* or John Waters's or Barry Levinson's films," she notes. "They were terrific."

Although video footage (ostensibly shot by Donovan) is a small component of the film, Schreiber was particularly concerned about the best way create it. "For a time, we considered using Mini DV. But I had shot [the German television production] *Breathe In, Breathe Out* for director Beth B on Mini DV, and while it looked great in good light, I was not impressed with how it handled low-light work, especially once it was transferred to film," she recalls. "I also went to Sundance to take a look at what had recently been shot on small-format video and blown up. I finally tested DigiBeta, Mini DV, DV Cam and Beta SP — as well as Pixelvision and an old tube camera. DigiBeta was the cleanest-looking video I tested, without being as pristine as high-definition.

"DigiBeta performed much better than the other small-format video cameras, which is what you'd expect because the camera costs a lot more," she continues. "After sending the test to

Swiss F/X for transfer, we decided it would be better to start with a great image and degrade it, rather than to start with something like Mini DV and try to make it look better. You can *always* make something look worse! Also, we had the luxury of being able to afford DigiBeta, which many independent filmmakers don't have. Switching back and forth between the mediums during the same day was very fast and efficient, because I lit the same way for DigiBeta as I do for film, with the exception of a bit of added fill light for DigiBeta." She adds that some of Donovan's video footage was originally shot by the actor with a PD100A video camera, but that footage was reshot in 16 x 9 and 4 x 3 DigiBeta.

According to Schreiber, the filmmakers were able to screen film dailies in a small projection room in their Baltimore hotel. The film was processed at Technicolor New York and Deluxe Toronto, with final work done at Deluxe Hollywood.

As the release of *Book of Shadows* approached, Schreiber was wrapping *Stranger Inside*, a feature about women prisoners directed by Cheryl Dunye (*Watermelon Woman*), and was beginning prep on the HBO pilot *Lessons Learned* for director Patrick Duncan (*84 Charlie Mopic*). This year should also see the release of two more of her recent efforts: *Buying the Cow*, a comedy she photographed for director Walt Becker, and Ann Hu's *Shadow Magic*, a film set in China at the dawn of the 20th century that won acclaim at Sundance this year (see *AC* April '00). As for working on her first potential blockbuster, Schreiber concludes, "There was a tremendous amount of pressure, and most of it was on Joe [Berlinger]. But he's a very accomplished, passionate storyteller, and it was inspiring to work with him [again]. One would never know that *Blair Witch 2* was his first narrative film."

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by Graham Rae

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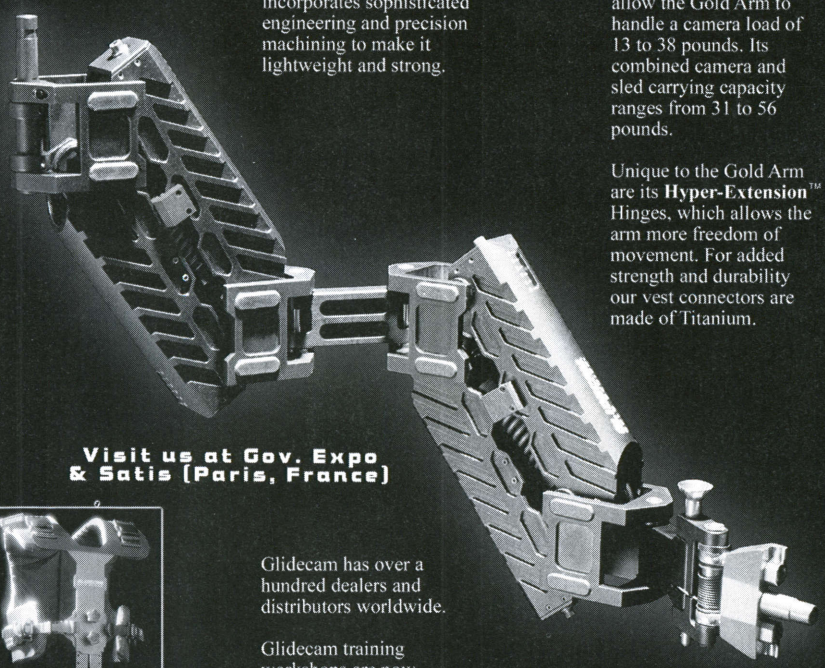

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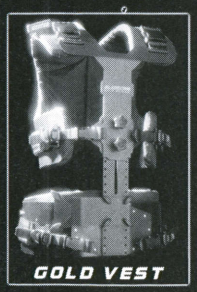

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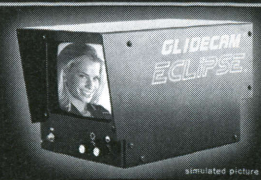

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In the Brazilian film *Me You Them,* Darlene (Regina Casé) shares her home with three lovers and bears each of them children. Pictured with her are (from left) Ciro (Luis Carlos Vasconcelos), Zezinho (Stênio Garcia) and Osias (Lima Duarte).

Jerry Springer run riot, it's actually the plot of *Me You Them*, a Brazilian comedy/drama based loosely on a true story. The film tells the story of Darlene (Regina Casé), a strong, multifaceted woman who draws different elements from the three men in her life: Osias (Lima Duarte), who provides her with shelter; Zezinho (Stênio Garcia), who showers her with sensitivity; and Ciro (Luis Carlos Vasconcelos), who supplies romantic passion. While the men might begrudge each other any affection or attention, they are ultimately forced to realize that their lives are immeasurably better for Darlene's presence, and they agree to draw appropriate interpersonal demarcation lines.

An official selection Un Certain Regard at Cannes this year, *Me You Them* was also a winner at the 35th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival in the Czech Republic, and was selected for this year's Edinburgh International Film Festival. The film was directed by Andrucha Waddington and photographed by Breno Silveira, marking their second feature collaboration (following last year's *Twins*). A graduate of the École Louis Lumière film school in Paris, Silveira has also collaborated with Waddington on commercials, music videos and documentaries over the past seven years.

Shot in eight weeks on a budget of $1.9 million, *Me You Them* takes place in the Brazilian hinterlands, an arid area where the sun beats down all day on the protagonists; they live without the bene-

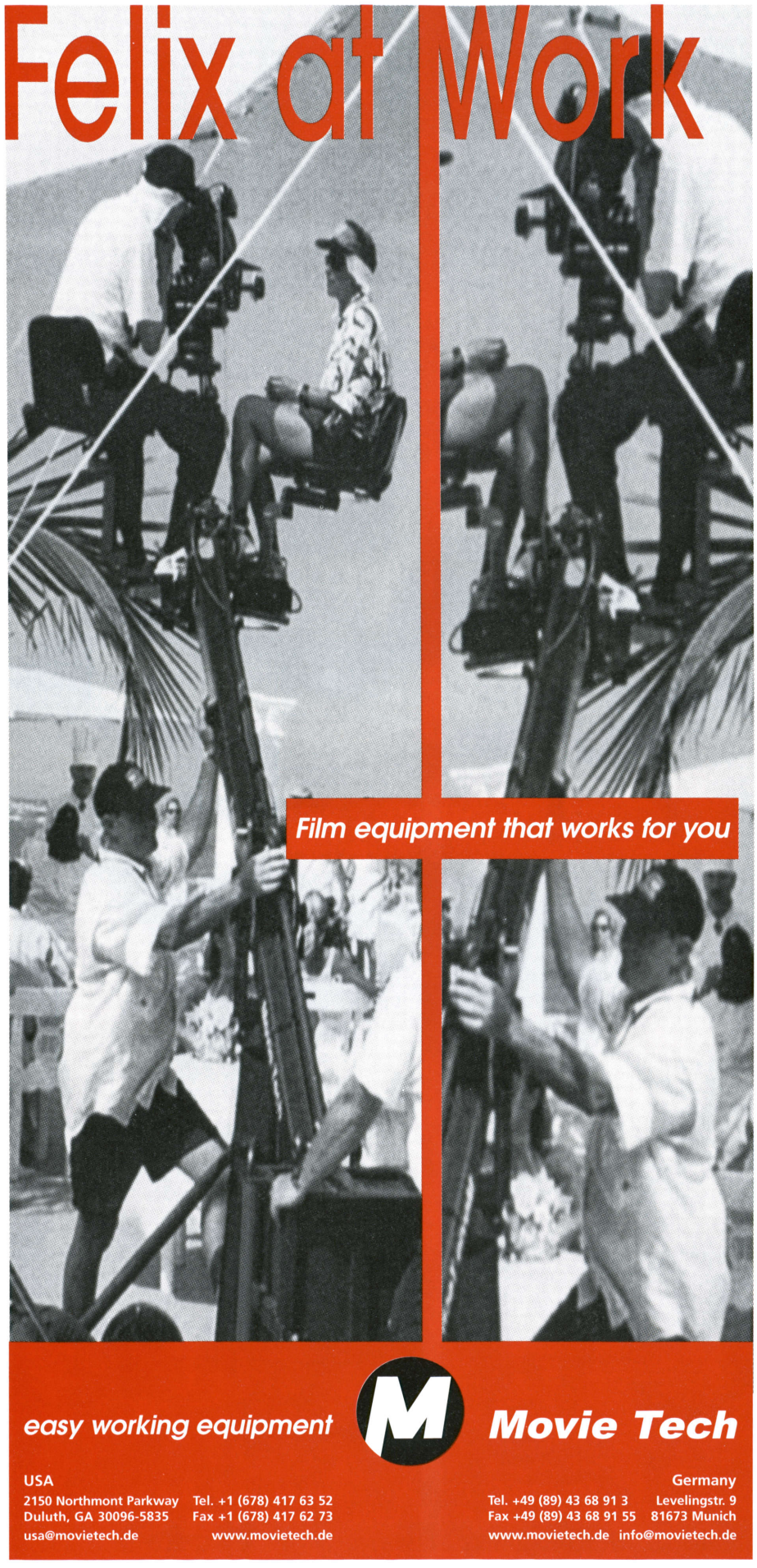
Photos courtesy of Columbia TriStar Films

fit of electricity, and candles, oil lamps and firelight illuminate their home at night. It is an area of harsh, natural beauty, where a sugarcane crop can rise like a green mirage from the baked and dusty horizon.

Silviera and Waddington decided to photograph the film in Super 35, their first experience with the format. "The landscape in that area has an infinite horizon, and we knew Super 35 would bring that out," the cinematographer explains through postproduction coordinator and interpreter Bianca Costa. "You can show a close-up of a character and feature his environment at the same time." Silviera discovered, however, that working with the new format required some adjustments. "It was difficult to equalize heights between people [in two-shots]," he notes. "When we [wanted to] show someone sitting close to someone standing, [both would only fit in the frame] if the table and chair were actually higher than they seemed."

Silveira chose an Arriflex 535B to capture the tropical vibration of the landscape's colors. "We chose [the Arri] because that camera is [easy] to move. It was a lighter camera that could be moved around to get sunrises and sunsets . . . it was possible to move from one place to another really fast." He adds that the relatively small shooting crew needed for the camera was an added bonus in the sweltering conditions.

Most of *Me You Them* was photographed with 25mm and 40mm fixed lenses because Silviera was pleased with the detail in close-ups, even against a black background. "We always used lenses [to capture] close-ups with a little bit of background, which is beautiful in this place," he explains, adding that he only used a telephoto lens for two sequences in the film. "We didn't use telephoto lenses [more] because you lost the background with them, and the background in this place is always so beautiful, so colorful. Sometimes we would open a lot for a big angle, but not very often." The daylight footage was shot on Kodak EXR 5245 stock, which the director of photography favored because little filtration was required to comple-



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Part of *Me You Them* was shot handheld, and Silveria also used lengthy dolly shots to help convey the impression of time flowing like molasses in that part of the country. Shooting in a sun-scorched area proved to be a bit of a headache for Silveira, who prefers to use a lot of contrast and shadow in the frame. The cinematographer — who cites Philippe Rousselot, AFC (*Interview with the Vampire*) and Darius Khondji, ASC, AFC (*The Ninth Gate*, *Seven*) among his influences — says he likes minimal lighting levels and occasionally even works with mirrors to reflect available light, illuminating a scene just enough to show what he wants or needs to.

Silveira says this approach merely accentuates the reality of the situation, whereas more prominent lighting would be intrusive and unrealistic. "I think it's beautiful to have a few points of light and see a little bit in the shadow," he notes. "We shot this film in the north of Brazil, where it was very, very hot and dry. The twilight sky is always bright because the air is still hot. We had too much light because the sun was too strong; there were only a few points of shadow we could get [by] using trees [to create shade]." He admits he wasn't above cheating a bit in order to get the light he wanted: "Sometimes we used [a tree branch] to make a little bit of shadow, to get out of the constant sun during the day."

Shooting at night was just as difficult. Because he has an aversion to using a lot of lighting, and to get his required contrast, he used a Chimera China ball. He photographed the night scenes with Kodak Vision 500T 5279 stock rated normally. "The 5279 is easy to work with in night shots and twilight because you don't have to light it too much," he says. "I love to work in twilight — that's why I think it's good to use a quick camera like the Arriflex. The 5279 [captures] the very rich blue of twilight, and you can see a little bit in the shadows, too." Noting that twilight seldom lasts very long, he says he often shot those scenes five times over five different nights to get the right light. Silveira shot at T2.1 because of the

shadow details that the stop rendered; also, it enabled him to use fewer lights, thus preserving his vision of the atmosphere.

The remoteness of the film's location also affected Silveira's lighting plan. "Often, we didn't have enough power to light long night sequences," he admits. "I didn't have a Musco light, or anything else we could position high enough to imitate moonlight. We found some old lamp posts, buried them partially in the ground and linked them with still cable; that way, I could position some lights high. The results are simple and very beautiful."

Darlene has a job cutting sugarcane, which is where she meets her third lover, the young Ciro. The green of the irrigated sugarcane field stands out in lush, fecund contrast to the barren yellow earth featured in the film up to that point. The cane is burned to make it ready for cutting, and Silveira used careful filtration to achieve the proper ash-blurred complexion on the actors near the smoke and fire. "I think shooting white or black people is easier, but if people are in the middle you have to add a little bit of color to the skin tone," he remarks. "It's good for the background, too, because it's a hot background." Silveira used very light coral filters to bring up reds and yellows in the film, as well as for skin tone. He also used a light Black ProMist filter to cut a touch of the contrast off the Zeiss lenses, which he found to be very strong.

Because it was his first Super 35 film, Silveira says he learned a lot about postproduction as he went along. According to the cinematographer, *Me You Them* was processed at CFI in Los Angeles because of the lack of acceptable facilities in Brazil, and he was very happy with the results. After having had less-than-inspiring experiences at other labs in the past, Silveira was anxious to find someone who understood what he and Waddington were trying to achieve, and the duo found an ally in CFI timer Chris Regan, who was willing to spend as much time as Silveira wanted in timing. "Timing is difficult for a lot of people because they don't have the

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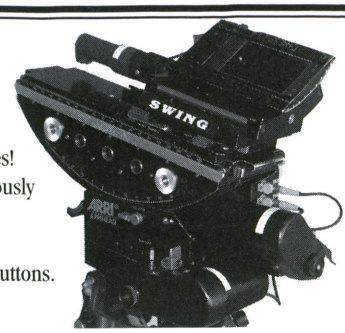

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Darlene takes a break from harvesting sugarcane. Cinematographer Breno Silveira says shooting on location in the remote, arid hinterlands of Brazil created some singular challenges.

patience for it," Silveira notes. "We knew what we wanted but weren't quite sure if it would turn out [that way] while we were shooting. I like to spend a long, long time in timing — I don't mind how many times I have to repeat it to get it right."

Rocky Mountain Fest

Durango, Colorado, will host its inaugural film festival March 10-18, 2001. The juried Durango Film Festival will offer independent feature films, documentaries, animated films, shorts and new media works in 35mm and 16mm film, as well as digital video. There will also be educational salons and panel discussions and a variety of parties and receptions. (Of course, do not forget the prime skiing located nearby.)

Film screenings will be at several locations in historic downtown Durango. Digital entries will be screened at the Abbey Theatre, the first fully digital theater in the United States. Each film will be shown three times. Receptions

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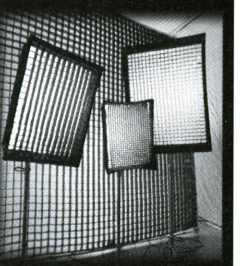

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and educational events will be held at various restaurants, historic art and performance studios, and other locations.

Filmmakers are encouraged to submit their works by December 1, 2000. Late submissions will be accepted until January 3, 2001.

For more information, contact the Durango Film Festival at (970) 385-8686 or visit the Web site: www.durangofilmfestival.com.

Celluloid Cleanliness

The Academy of Television Arts & Sciences presented its Engineering Award to Lipsner-Smith and Consolidated Film Industries for their joint development of the new Model CF-8200 Ultrasonic Film-Cleaning Machine. The award is recognition for achievements that exhibit a high level of engineering and are important to the progress of the industry.

In anticipation of new regulations governing the use of perchloroethylene for film cleaning, Lipsner-Smith, based in Illinois and England, and CFI, based in Hollywood, worked together to develop the high-speed cleaning machine to provide safe and effective film cleaning using 3M Novec Engineered Fluid HFE-8200. The fluid has zero ozone-depletion potential, is not a VOC, and achieves results comparable to perchloroethylene when used in the CF-8200.

Film Preservation Fellowship

The Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA) and Kodak have announced an annual fellowship program for students interested in film preservation and archiving. The fellowship, sponsored by Kodak, is valued at $10,000 and includes an academic scholarship, a six-week summer internship at Cinesite (as well as other restoration and preservation facilities in Hollywood), and registration for the annual AMIA conference.

The summer internship will incorporate transportation and housing and will also pay an hourly wage. Kodak will work with the winner throughout the year and assist his or her learning institution by providing research, educational resources, on-campus speakers, literature and technical information.

Selection will be based upon the applicant's commitment to pursuing a career in moving-image archiving, academic records and the strength of the program of study as it applies to moving image archiving. Students from all countries are eligible; they must be at least 21 years old and either be accepted or enrolled in a graduate-level or other advanced program in moving-image studies, including filmmaking, film library, archival administration, museum studies, or a related discipline.

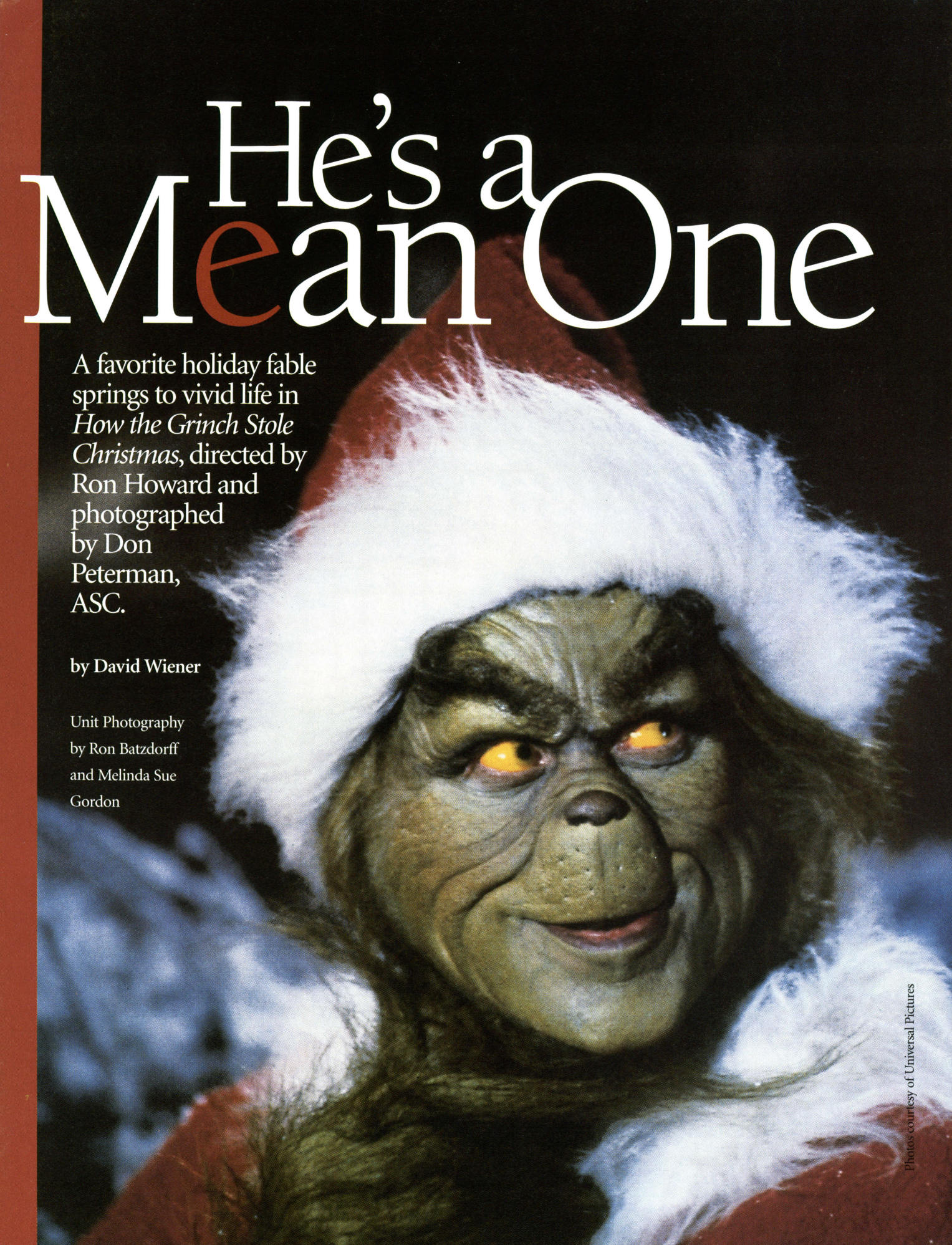
More details can be obtained by contacting the AMIA office at (310) 550-1300, fax (310) 550-1363, e-mail: amia@amianet.org, Web site: www.amianet.org. ■

He's a Mean One

A favorite holiday fable springs to vivid life in *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, directed by Ron Howard and photographed by Don Peterman, ASC.

by David Wiener

Unit Photography by Ron Batzdorff and Melinda Sue Gordon



Photos courtesy of Universal Pictures

At the risk of sounding like a true holiday humbug, Don Peterman, ASC admits that he'd never read *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* before he accepted the job of shooting director Ron Howard's feature-film version. "It's really funny," Peterman remembers. "I read the movie script before I ever read the book! It was the same kind of thing with *Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home*. When I first was offered that job, I didn't know *any* of those characters other than Spock! I'd never seen the television show, so I wasn't sure I should do it. But my agent said, 'Look, don't turn this down, this is going to be good!' And oddly enough, I got an Oscar nomination for it."

Nevertheless, Peterman feels that *The Grinch* was his most unusual assignment yet. "There were so many peculiar things on this picture, things that just don't come up often," he says. "There was the wild makeup and the [limited] hours we could work each day [because of the time required to apply Jim Carrey's makeup], not to mention the gigantic sets on 10 soundstages at Universal. I've done 26 pictures, and these were the biggest sets I've ever worked on. At the start, it looked like the lights were going to be prohibitively expensive. We were able to scale that down, and with the help of producer David Womark, we were able to get what we needed. Even scaled down, though, this was the biggest lighting package I've ever used."

The sets required massive air-conditioning units, not only because of the heat buildup from the lights, but also because the actors wore winter clothes and the heavy makeup. "In prep, we realized we needed extra generators for the air-conditioning, but they really worked," Peterman recalls. "In the morning the stages were about 45 degrees [Fahrenheit], and by the end of the day they'd be around 60. That made Carrey's makeup and furry costume a bit easier to wear. It helped the other performers, too, since they had to be all bundled up."

A small army of makeup people and hairstylists prepared the cast for each day's shoot, working under the supervision of five-time Academy Award winner Rick Baker. "Rick did a great job," Peterman says. "Even the extras in the background all look different from one another. There's a stage at Cinovation, his company in Glendale [California], so instead of dragging the makeup people over to the studio, we were able to do makeup and costume tests there. I tried all kinds of green light on the Grinch. His fur is an olive-green hue, but it leans toward brown and photographs black if you don't watch out. At the same time, I didn't want him to be too green, too much like a cartoon. However, I did let him go pretty green when we showed him as a child during a flashback."

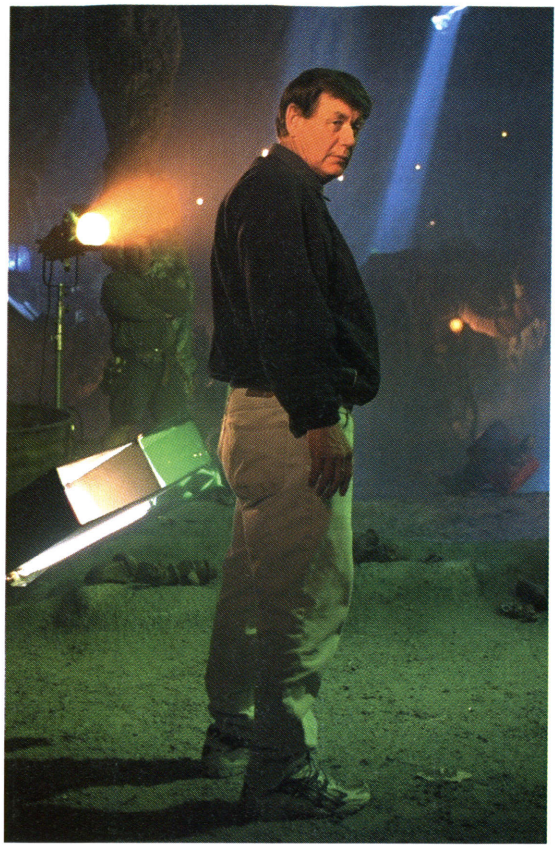
Peterman originally wanted to do the flashback scenes in black-and-white, with the Grinch a bright green exception. This idea was shelved because it was deemed too expensive for a film already facing an array of logistical challenges. One of the biggest worries was the time it took to transform Carrey into the Grinch — a consideration that affected the cinematographer's lighting design. "Every morning, they worked on Jim for four hours," Peterman reveals. "His makeup and contacts were hard to wear for long periods, and even the most skilled experts can't change the fact that it takes a long time to do that kind of thing. We'd get Jim at 11 a.m., and we usually worked with him until about 6 p.m. Because we had to work fast when we had him, I didn't have time to move lights around the studio floor or bring in a Condor to light a building or any of the usual things you do on a stage. We had to figure out how to provide most of the lighting we'd need on the huge sets simply by throwing switches. It all had to be pre-rigged before anybody walked onto a stage."

The need to shoot quickly also meant that most of the lights had to be hung from the soundstage ceiling. Because the sets towered high above the studio floor, the lights had to be hung *above* the perms; otherwise, they'd appear in the shots. In addition, huge 360-degree bluescreens were used on some sets, and these also required their own pre-rigged lights.

Peterman gives much of the credit for the first-unit prep work to second-unit director of photography Keith Peterman and chief lighting technician Gary Palmer. "Gary is actually a director of photography himself," Peterman explains. "He's

Opposite: The Grinch (Jim Carrey) dons Santa's costume in his scheme to stop Christmas. This page: The cranky curmudgeon confronts little Cindy-Lou Who (Taylor Momsen).

He's a Mean One



Above: Don Peterman, ASC examines his lighting within the Grinch's cave. Below: The Grinch lectures his faithful dog, Max, who's been artfully disguised as a reindeer.

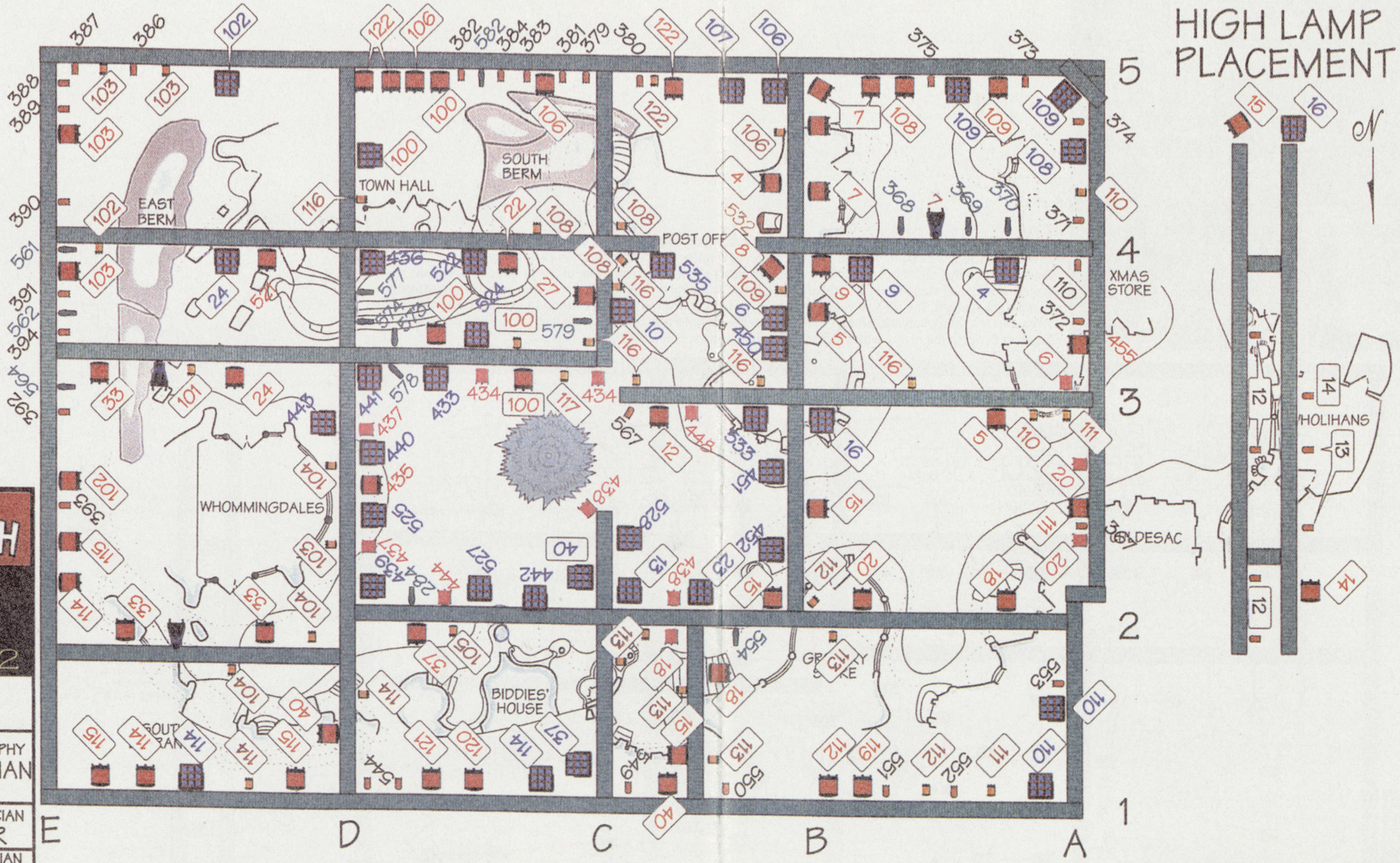
done commercials and visual effects work, and he's also worked with me on quite a few films as chief lighting technician. [Lighting console operator] Scott Barnes created lighting schematics based on the master lighting blueprints I worked out with Gary. We got a lot of prep time, which is something I believe in, because any wasted time always comes off the hours you've allotted for the lighting and actual production. Once we were in production, I'd prepare by going over the upcoming week's work with Ron [Howard]."

Some of Peterman's prep time was spent with production designer Michael Corenblith, who helped him devise Seussian patterns to throw on the walls of the Whoville interiors. For a scene set in the Whoville post office, Peterman asked Corenblith about projecting a pattern straight down at a beige floor with Leko lights. "I always asked before I did anything like that so my ideas wouldn't work against his set designs," Peterman says. "Michael came up with a pattern that worked great; you'll see it on the post office floor and also on the people as they walk through the halls. Sometimes we'd project window patterns onto walls. There's a scene in Cindy-Lou Who's house when the family comes down Christmas morning to find all their presents gone. The scene takes place at dawn, so we projected weird window patterns on the wall to suggest that the sun was just peeking up. We'd also project very hard HMI shadow lights through lace onto walls, just to make things even more 'Whoey.'"

During their prep discussions, Howard and Peterman decided to add some extra eccentricity to the images by using dutch angles in combination with side-to-side camera movement. "Ron wanted those moves countering each other," Peterman explains. "In other words, the camera would be dutched to the right and panned left. It worked, because everything's off-center in Whoville: the buildings and streets are all crooked. All through prep, Ron kept harping on the fact that he did not want this picture to look stagebound, which is why we also shot at a couple of exterior locations."

One strategy that kept Whoville from looking too stagey was the use of realistic computer-generated skies created by Digital Domain's Kurt Williams and Kevin Mack and their staff. "Those are just tremendous," Peterman says. "The morning clouds are pink on the bottom and they move very slowly and realistically. That's why we had a huge bluescreen all the way around the sets." The bluescreen was lit with pre-hung DMX Image 80 Kino Flos, banks of eight "super blue" tubes that produce light at 420 nanometers. All of the bluescreens could be lit to various levels in seconds by board operator David Slodki.

The Grinch was shot in the spherical 1.85:1 format. Almost all of the picture, including bluescreen sequences, was shot on Kodak EXR 5293 film stock rated at ASA 200. (Eastman's SFX 200T was used for some bluescreen work as well.) The dark, spooky Grinch cave was filmed with Kodak Vision 500T 5279. Peterman's camera package consisted of two Panaflex Platinums and a Panaflex Lightweight II, the latter of which was used on the Steadicam by Greg Smith, assisted by Paul Plannette. The A-camera operator was Ray de la Motte, assisted by Brad Peterman. Don Peterman notes that his team also used a Libra head mounted on a Super Technocrane, which allowed them to get very dynamic shots anywhere on the sets, and to maintain a Seussian look.



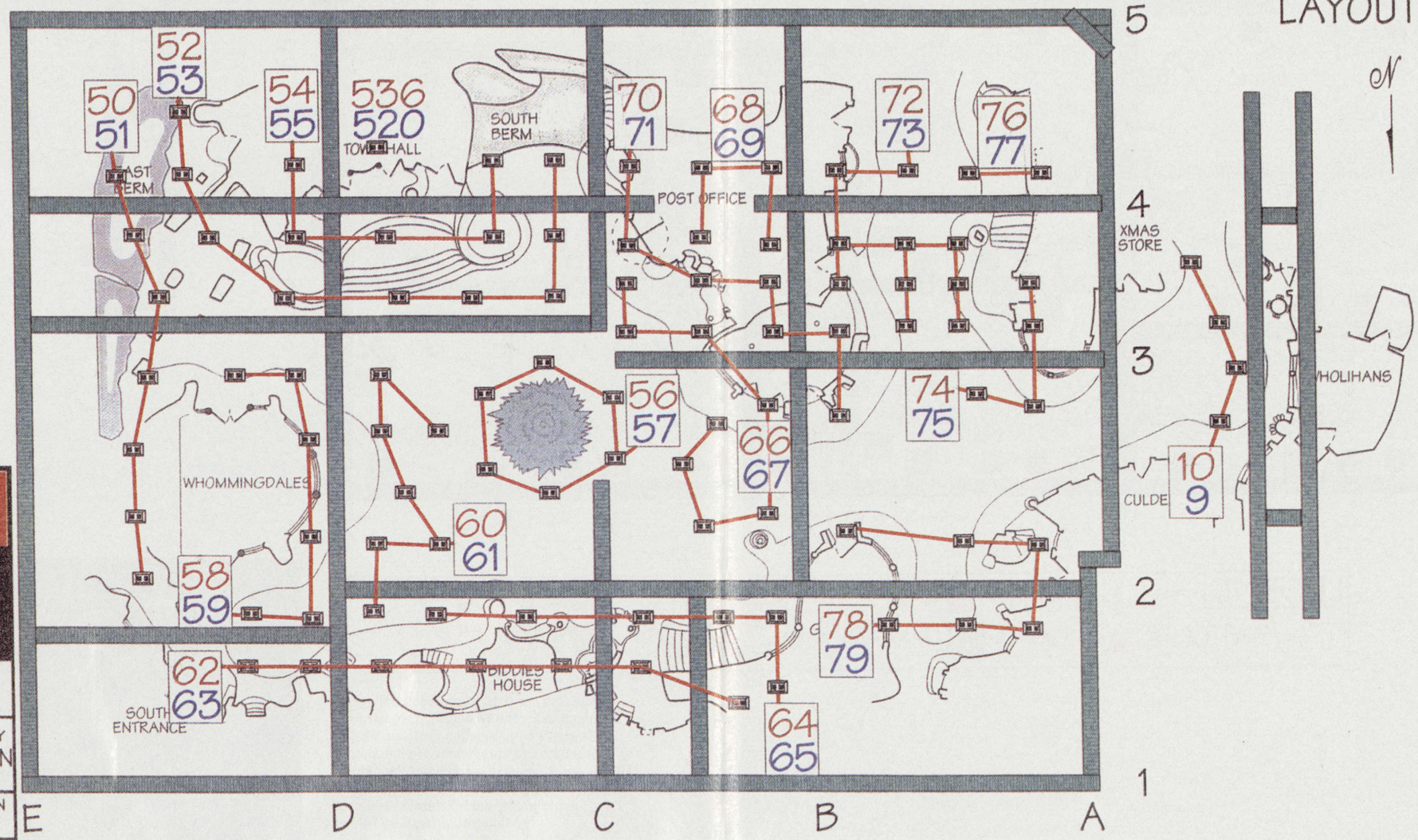
LEGEND

= SWITCH # = LEKO = 5K = 10K = MAXI = 2K = PARCAN = 8K SOFT = 6K PAR

A wide array of fixtures provided the overall illumination for the Whoville set, constructed on Stage 12 by production designer Michael Corenblith's team. Director of photography Donald Peterman, ASC worked out the lighting scheme with second-unit director of photography Keith Peterman and chief lighting technician Gary Palmer.

Nearly 130 coop lights supplemented the high lamps hanging over Whoville. "On a set like that, I wouldn't even try to use lots of lights to give the impression of single-source sunlight," says cinematographer Peterman. "If I did, all I'd get would be a bunch of phony shadows coming from different directions, and the scenes would look stagebound. I decided to use coops to create an ambience of soft, overcast sunlight rather than bright sunlight. The chicken coops were hung as high above the perms as we could get them, and they were skirted with Duvetyn to protect the bluescreen from light contamination. We also put tracing paper a few feet beneath the coops, which softened the light and evened it out."

COOP LAYOUT



The GRINCH

UNIVERSAL

STAGE 12

DIRECTOR
RON HOWARD

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY
DONALD PETERMAN
ASC

CHIEF LIGHTING TECHNICIAN
GARY PALMER

CHIEF RIGGING TECHNICIAN
FRANK DOROWSKY

LIGHTING CONSOLE OPERATORS
DAVID SLODKI
SCOTT BARNES

LEGEND

CHICKEN COOP

DAY - EVEN NUMBERS

NIGHT - ODD NUMBERS

"We used close-focus Panavision Primo lenses — 6mm, 10mm, 14mm, 21mm, 27mm and 35mm — sometimes just eight to 10 inches from the actors, which is good for comedy," the director of photography says. "All of the Steadicam footage was shot with the same Primos we used on the Platinum cameras. Generally, we used Tiffen Black ProMist filters [#1, #2 and #3] for diffusion. The wide lenses really worked with the giant sets, especially [those depicting] Whoville. Those sets were so big you had the feeling you were outside all the time, even without the CG skies!"

Peterman says he also prefers wide lenses because he feels that they create more dynamic close-ups. "I used to be a little leery of that, but I learned the value of wide lenses for close-ups from [director and former cinematographer] Barry Sonnenfeld, for whom I photographed *Addams Family Values*, *Get Shorty* and *Men in Black*," he recalls. "When you shoot somebody with a wide-angle lens, their face registers with the audience right away. Plus, lenses today hardly distort at all."

Lighting the wide-open spaces of Whoville called for practically every chicken-coop light in Hollywood (see diagram labeled "Coop Layout"). "We used almost 130 coop lights," Peterman details. "On a set like that, I wouldn't even try to use lots of lights to give the impression of single-source sunlight. If I did, all I'd get would be a bunch of phony shadows coming from different directions, and the scenes would look stagebound. I decided to use coops to create an ambience of soft, overcast sunlight rather than bright sunlight. The chicken coops were hung as high above the perms as we could get them, and they were skirted with Duvetyn to protect the bluescreen from light contamination. We also put tracing paper a few feet beneath the coops, which softened the light and evened it out.

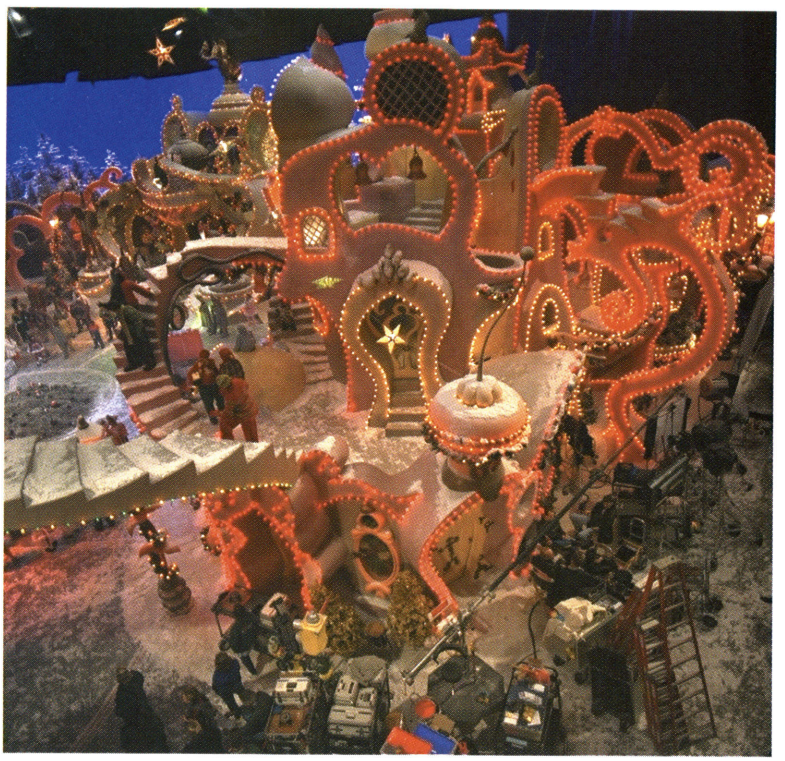
"We had night as well as day scenes in Whoville, so we slid an aluminum divider into each coop and gelled each side differently. One side of each coop had four 1,000-watt globes gelled ½ blue, suggesting an overcast day, and the other side had two 1,000-watt globes gelled ¾ blue, suggesting a winter night. We could throw a switch and light up only the day side, and throw another switch to light up only the night side. The night lighting was supplemented by 34,000 feet of Christmas decorations strung all over Whoville. We had to do the chicken coops the way we did to save money; if we'd put them on dimmers, it would have cost another $250,000. But the Whoville practicals were all on dimmers so we could set [and gel] them any way we wanted."

For some of the film's early-morning scenes, Peterman used 20Ks gelled with full CTO to create the impression of sunlight breaking over distant mountains. "When actors walked through that light, they would warm up for just a couple of seconds," he says. "I'd hit parts of the Whoville buildings with 20Ks gelled with full CTO, and it looked like real morning light. I used Tiffen Black ProMist #2 filters just about all the time on all the cameras, even on the Steadicam, to keep the colors from oversaturating."

On a catwalk below the perms, Peterman set up a thicket of stronger lights to augment the soft ambience of the chicken coops (see diagram labeled "High Lamp Placement"). A combination of 10Ks, 5Ks, 2Ks, 8K soft lights, Maxis and Pars was used to cover Whoville and backlight the actors. "We gelled most of those with red, green, blue, yellow or whatever

Above: The Grinch indulges in a triumphant leer as his devious plan begins to take shape. Director Howard says that Carrey's ability to act through his heavy makeup led the filmmakers to shoot a surprising number of close-ups. Left: The crew sets up a scene on Mount Crumpit within a Universal soundstage.

He's a Mean One



In constructing sets for Whoville, production designer Michael Corenblith drew inspiration from the work of famed Spanish architect Gaudi, who may have influenced Dr. Seuss himself.

we wanted," he details. "They were backlights, but we also used them whenever we needed some source light for the night scenes in Whoville. We also had a few Lekos up there to project patterns that could also be used for backlights in a pinch."

A light mist was smoked onto the sets to make them look as much like real exteriors as possible. "The mist helped the background fall off into the distance," the cinematographer says. "Using Tiffen Black ProMist filters all the time helped create that impression, too. Mechanical and digital effects were sometimes used together. There's a snowstorm scene on a mountain where the Grinch lives [that features] fake snow, diffusion on the camera, mist-smoke on the set and a stormy CGI sky. However, when you see closer shots of the Grinch in a blizzard, that's all CGI snow, because the snow-foam really irritated Jim's contact lenses."

Due to the size of the production, *The Grinch* required two units working simultaneously. The second-unit director was the film's executive producer, Todd Hallowell, and his director of photography was Keith Peterman, who also did second-unit cinematography on *Planes, Trains and Automobiles; Men in Black; Addams Family Values;* and *Mighty Joe Young*. "Keith can match my footage exactly," Peterman notes, "so Ron knew that his images would look just like mine. This wasn't like a regular first and second unit, really; it was more like two first units. Keith did practically all of the bluescreen work, which took about a month, as well as our two exterior locations."

"There was no way to get this show done with a single unit," Keith Peterman agrees. "There were dozens of makeup people, all these actors in prosthetics, children [and even] a dog. It was just endless!"

Each unit was able to watch what the other was filming on monitors connected to the camera video-assist systems. "They had to run a lot of cable between the sets to do that, but it saved lots of time," Keith Peterman explains. "It meant that Ron could call us and ask us to shoot something differently, and we could take care of it right away."

Most of the dialogue scenes were shot by Don Peterman, but Keith's work crops up all over the movie. "I did the Whoville Christmas lighting contest," Keith Peterman says. "That was an exterior shot on the Universal backlot. The Whos always go overboard decorating for Christmas, and there are two neighbors competing for first prize. Their lights start out pretty normal, but eventually they [become] ridiculous displays."

The first two stories of each house were built full size on the backlot, but the upper stories were added digitally during postproduction. Keith Peterman's job for this scene was to create the blinding glare from the Whos' overwhelming displays. "We decided to use 16 Dino lights mounted on lifts high above each house," he says. "The Dinos stood in for the upper stories. Some of them were gelled red, orange, yellow and green, and they were all on dimmers so we could create the look of pulsing and chasing Christmas lights. We didn't have to worry about getting the Dino lights in the shot because they'd be covered up later by the CGI. By the time the contest reached its grand finale, we needed the spectators and judges down below to be four or five stops overexposed. They put on welder's glasses just to watch; it was almost like faking a nuclear detonation!"

Keith Peterman also lit some interior scenes, including one in which the Grinch sucks up Christmas presents — and a cat — with a big vacuum hose. "There were a lot of practicals lighting that scene, lots of glowing ornaments and Christmas lights, so I just supplemented them with table lamps and Kino Flos," he says. "I had a Kino Flo backlighting the cat and a 5K key on it from the side."

Fans of Dr. Seuss's book will

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He's a Mean One

The Whoville interiors also eschew right angles in favor of the curvy and whimsical Seuss aesthetic.

remember the moment when a kinder, gentler Grinch decides to return the presents he stole, delivering them to Whoville in his sleigh. For that sequence, Keith Peterman's unit went to Solitude, Utah. "That scene actually begins on a soundstage," he details. "A mountain set was lit for dawn and the 'sun' hit the Grinch. We had metal shutters on 1 ½ CTO-gelled Dino lights, and we opened the shutters slowly, so you can see the light change on him as he has his change of heart. He gets into the sleigh with Cindy-Lou Who and Max [the dog] and starts sledding down toward Whoville, but he falls out and ends up skiing behind the sleigh. That part of the sequence was shot on location in Utah. We didn't use any lights for those long shots, just natural light with the sun really low in the morning and late afternoon. We got good footage of the stunt skier from a Steadicam on an insert-snowmobile, and we also did some shots with the camera mounted on the snowmobile.

"When we got back to Universal, I did some closer blue-screen shots of the Grinch to intercut with the long-shot location footage," he continues. "I had to have shots suggesting both bright overcast and full sun, because he goes in and out of this low morning sun during his trip downhill. For the overcast inserts, I lit the Grinch with a ¼-blue-gelled, diffused 20K key light, adding rimlight with ¼-blue-gelled, diffused Maxi-Brutes behind and above him. For his sunny inserts, the key light was a 10K with a 1 ½ orange gel from the back or ¾ from the side."

Close-ups of actresses Taylor Momsen (who plays little Cindy-Lou Who) and Christine Baranski (Martha May Who-vier) presented special difficulties for Don Peterman. Howard wanted the actresses to look great on film, despite the strange hair, weird clothing and outlandish colors that defined their characters. Fortunately, Peterman has accumulated a great deal of experience shooting cosmetics commercials, so he knows how to put an actress's best face forward. He explains, "For their stationary close-ups, I employed the same type of soft light I use when I do makeup ads for TV. I use a big box that's 6 feet long by 2 feet square; I put a light at the back end and three evenly spaced sheets of tracing paper inside. The light comes out very, very soft, but it's still controlled.

"To give Christine Baranski a romantic look, I used that box light, a 100mm lens, a #2 or #3 Tiffen Black ProMist filter on the camera, and an amber backlight. All of that desaturated the colors a bit, provided diffusion and gave her a kind of glow. The box light was placed above the camera magazine, pointing down at about a 45-degree angle toward the actress's forehead to hide the shadow behind her. You do get a chin shadow, but it's a very soft one.

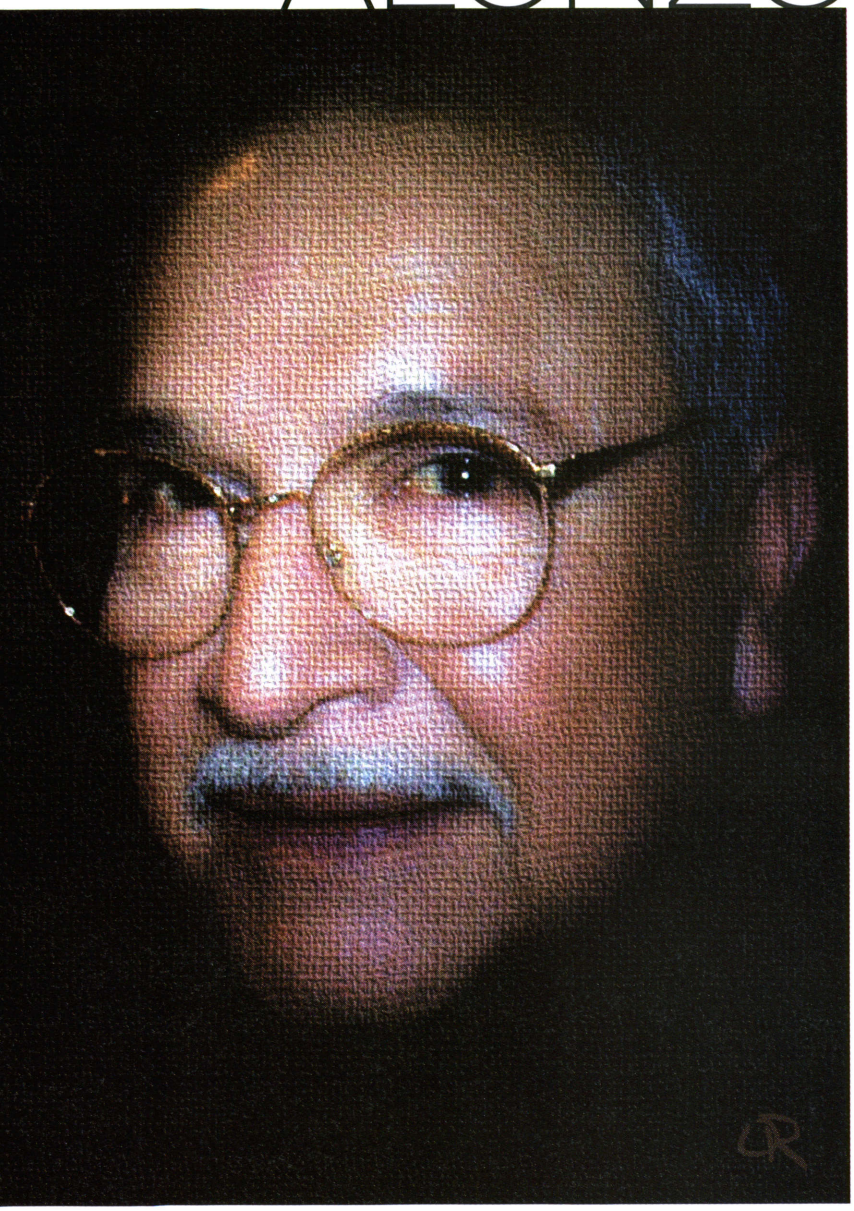
"It was even tougher to light close-ups for *moving* actors," Peterman notes. "You couldn't light them from the ground [because] it would take too long to set up. Instead, we let the actors move around and we just followed them with handheld lights. A lot of the time, we used a Xenon flashlight on the Grinch to pick up his eyes; it was a handheld DC light that could be gelled. We used a yellow gel for close-ups because his eyes were yellow. We'd also pick out his dog's eyes with a ½ CTO on the flashlight; Gary Palmer was so good at it you don't even see it — it's just a glow."

Peterman also used a Chinese lantern with Photofloods inside as a moving key light, hanging it from an old-fashioned, 30'-long sound boom. "I used the Chinese lantern when we were following Cindy-Lou Who walking up the mountain to see the Grinch; there was so much toplight coming down that the Chinese lantern would sometimes act as more of a moving fill. We used gelled fluorescent lights on long poles the same way, especially for shots of the Grinch's dog, Max. The dog had dark eyes, and he always looked better with a little highlight in his eyes, so we'd lead him along with a fluorescent on a pole — his very own close-up light. Also, I'd always backlight him with orange."

The Grinch's cave was a set that stood three stories high (see diagrams labeled "First Floor [Grinch Cave]" and "Second Floor [Grinch Cave]"). Most of the cave was modeled out of Styrofoam, and the "rocky" terrain was not easy to negotiate. Hauling lights around the set would have caused expensive delays, so Peterman once again relied upon pre-rigging.

Discussing the setup illustrated in the "Second Floor [Grinch Cave]" diagram, Peterman details, "I had 13 7K ½-CTB-gelled Xenons pointing down all at the same angle

JOHN A. ALONZO, ASC



Digital photo by Owen Roizman, ASC. using the Kodak DC-290.

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American Cinematographer

A DIGITAL WHO'S WHO

by Ron Magid

Arguably the greatest challenge director Ron Howard and his very talented team faced on *The Grinch* was translating the fantastic details of Dr. Seuss's world, with its whimsically curlicue architecture and bizarre landscapes, to film. While Seuss's illustrations are deliberately, strikingly two-dimensional (and were faithfully captured that way in Chuck Jones's beloved animated cartoon), the film's production designer, Michael Corenblith, boldly took the look into the three-dimensional realm. The result is radically different from both the book and cartoon, yet decidedly Seussian.

Taking the reins of his sleigh, the Grinch sails over Whoville in a scene enhanced by Digital Domain's CGI artists.

Howard wanted Digital Domain (whose artists received the company's second Oscar nomination and first BAFTA for their effects work on *Apollo 13*) to enhance and augment this hybrid world with 3-D extensions, matte paintings and CG Whos, which proved a much tougher task than originally expected. "I didn't think much of that challenge initially, because everything seemed as if it was figured out and well-defined," says visual effects supervisor Kevin Scott Mack (*What Dreams May Come*, *Fight Club*). "But when we tried to make that style real, we realized the qualities that make something 'Seussian' are rather elusive. It took quite a bit of experimentation to really hit it and yet maintain a sense of realism."

DD's artists couldn't begin working on shots until they got background plates from the production, and although that helped in terms of creating a cohesive vision for the film, it hurt DD in a key area: time. "[Once the plates arrived], we didn't have a heck of a lot [of time] to get through the shots," concedes visual effects producer Julian Levi. "Consequently, we made a decision to do a lot of work up front, to create pipelines and previsualizations on a large number of fully CG shots, so that when we finally got all of the plates in, we had a lot of the methods already planned out. That expedited creating the rest of Whoville."

Mack's ambitious solution required set extension supervisor Vernon Wilbert and his team to construct Whoville and the entire Who Valley — including the Grinch's aerie, Mount Crumpit, and the surrounding suburbs and mountains extending for hundreds of miles — as a single contiguous CG model. "That way, all of the relationships between size, distance, placement and lighting were determined as an actual 3-D world," Mack explains. "Towering over Who Valley, which is a little bowl that sits on top of a big mountain, is Mount Crumpit, which is three times the size of Mount Everest, and from there you can see a great distance. We therefore had to build an elaborate landscape, including not just the valley but what we called the Badlands; we built mountains [stretching] out a hundred miles in 3-D! It really helped us to not have to make a completely new painting or a completely new 3-D model for every angle."

The approach also paid surprising dividends on the set. When cinematographer Don Peterman, ASC and Howard lined up a shot in the Whoville town square that would have a digital Mount Crumpit added to the background later, DD's team was able to show them a previsualization of the completed shot right there on the stage. "Don and Ron could look at our previz and say, 'That's good, but let's move Crumpit over a little for this shot,'" Mack notes. "In the end, though, it wound up being easier to just frame for where it really was, as though it were there, so we didn't really 'cheat' that much."

In fact, Peterman awed the DD crew when he began intuitively composing his shots as though the digital background was already there. "Although we had a previz workstation on set, he didn't really rely on that to compose his shots," Levi says. "Tracking supervisor Rob Frick was very diligent about placing tracking markers and taking measurements on stage while the crew was shooting; we established early on where the practical Crumpit peak and Who Valley were in relation to what was going to be surrounding them. So when it was time to do our work, we referred to our onstage notes, placed the practical setpiece, and then just put our virtual camera where it would be in this little world we'd created. Amazingly, when we got the plates, our digital pieces just fell right into place! [It was as though] Don had composed each shot knowing exactly what the background was going to be!"

Tools that enabled DD to match Peterman's on-set depth of field represent another leap forward in the digital enhancement of cinematography. "We made sure that if the bluescreen markers were out of focus, our 3-D extensions were out of focus to the same degree," Mack says. "When Don was racking to keep the Grinch in focus in the foreground, we exactly matched that rack on our CG background."

In the "old days" — for exam-

ple, back when DD was working on *The Fifth Element* — effects supervisors would have to make a decision early in the process about which shots would use 2-D matte paintings versus 3-D elements. Not anymore. "I feel proud that we've closed the loop between 2-D and 3-D on *The Grinch*," Mack says. "We don't make a distinction anymore between 2-D and 3-D, because all of our shots are tracked in 3-D. With that information, we're able to determine exactly when we can segue from our 3-D models into a 2-D matte painting. Of course, the 2-D painting must be a certain distance away [to prevent] an actual perspective change on individual objects."

For shots with elaborate camera moves, CG supervisor Matthew Butler and the DD team designed a pipeline based on the "pan-and-tile" technique, which enabled their system to treat the 2-D background element essentially as a large still that the camera then roamed across. "The distant mountains you see sliding behind Mount Crumpit, for example, were created in 3-D, but once we figured out the move and the camera's field of view, we rendered them as a single, huge 2-D image. We could then actually apply 3-D camera transformations to the 2-D rendered image to introduce the appropriate lens curvature and perspective distortion into our 2-D background. Lastly, members of Shannan Burkley's paint team painted on that 2-D image, adding shading and lighting to dress it up. It's basically a painting on a one-frame rendered still, with a post move added over that. Working that way is much faster than tweaking shaders and models forever."

In order to determine which elements should be 2-D, Mack's team did 3-D renders of the Who Valley model. "We'd calculate the overall field of view for the shot with the camera move, render a still, apply the move in pan-and-tile as a 2-D transformation, and then just put them together," Mack explains. "If one appeared to slip against the other, we knew we needed to go 3-D."

To create Whoville, DD's artists began by surveying the buildings on the set. "We rebuilt the rather small town square and its little ring of buildings digitally before we even started shooting," Mack says. "We also built several rings out from that to expand Whoville itself, as well as suburbs going farther out. We built all of that into our 3-D CG model of Who Valley."

However, DD went far beyond just constructing a CG Whoville and filling it with tons of falling digital snow. Remember all of those "Whos down in Whoville" that Dr. Seuss wrote about? Many of them are CG, too. In fact, DD's artists needed to create so many of the critters that they devised a "Who Construction Kit," which may well be the Central Casting template of the new millennium. "We didn't want to just duplicate the characters; we wanted to make more of them based on that particular style," Mack says. "Our kit was a really neat automated thing that allowed us to start with a generic Who, then dial in how big his or her ears and nose were, how heavy he or she was, how old, and all of that. Then we made an elaborate wardrobe file from which we could pick different outfits and change their patterns. Our kit made it possible for animation supervisor Randall Rosa and his team to do the shots [that feature] 80, 100 or even 200 Whos very quickly."

Levi adds, "That was very helpful for everybody creating the Whos. If we hadn't done that, we would've had to create each Who individually, which really would have slowed down the process."

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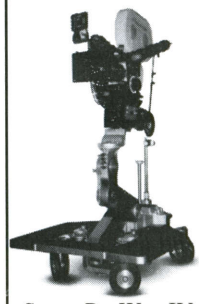
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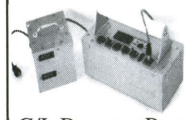
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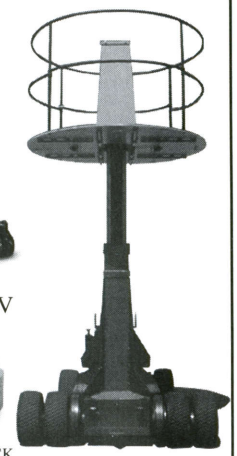
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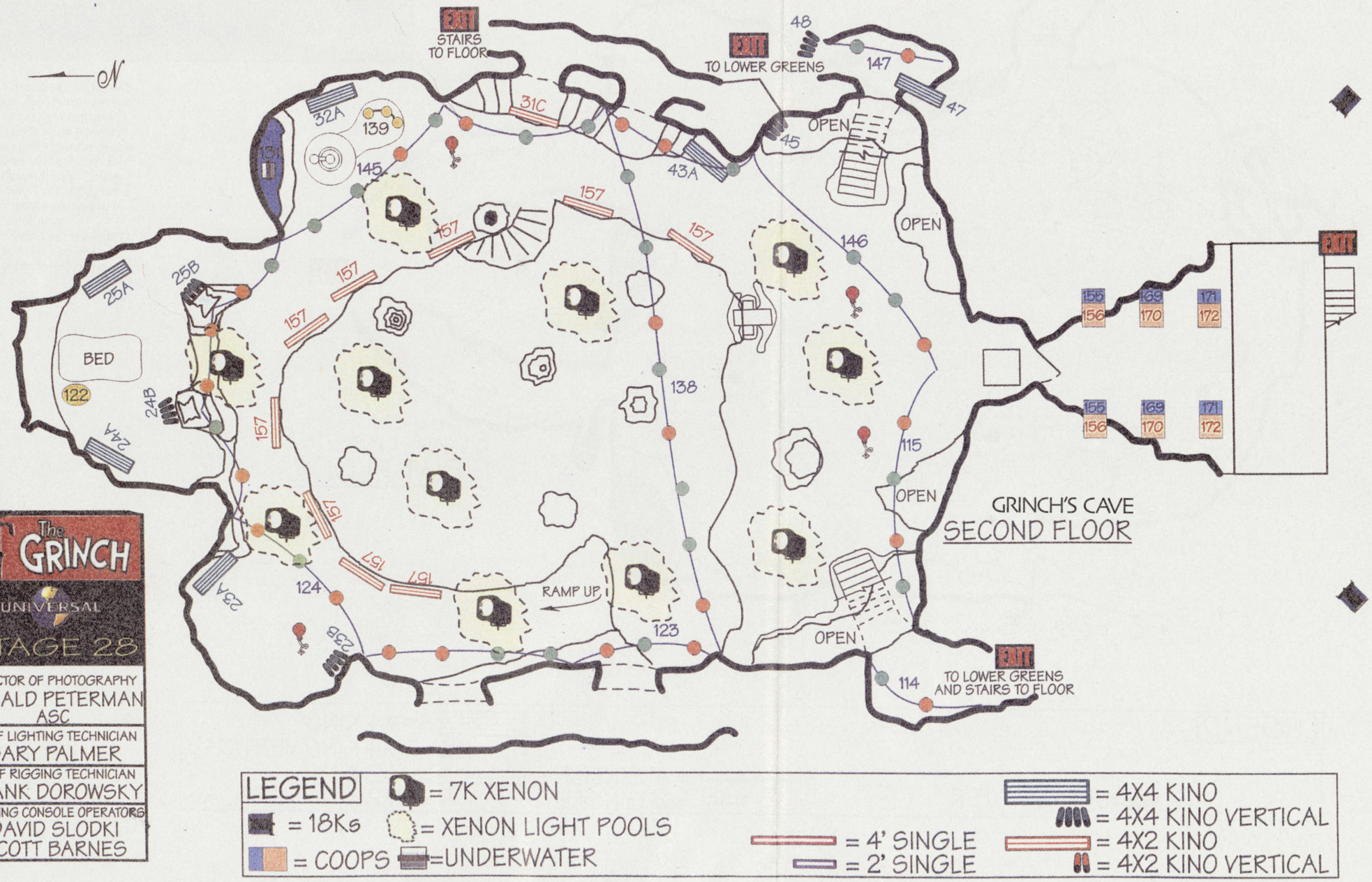
to suggest shafts of glaring, overcast daylight coming through cracks in the cave's roof. When the Grinch walks through these shafts of light, he's briefly overexposed by about two to three stops, which works really well. For night sequences inside the cave, we made the same 7K Xenons a bit colder and dimmer by changing the gel to full CTB, suggesting an overcast night. I sometimes put silver reflectors on the cave floor so the Xenon light would bounce up and illuminate some of the stalagmites and stalactites. All of that gave the impression of a cold, dank cave."

Peterman also hid fluorescents around the cave to uplight the walls and model the crags. On the second-floor cave diagram, you'll notice a cluster of fluorescents on the left; that's the location of the Grinch's bedroom. Peterman explains, "Behind his bed there were lots of holes built into the walls, and we put 5,000°K fluorescents there to give the room a little glow, as though light was leaking in through cracks in the rock."

The cave also features very shallow pools of water (mostly on the first floor) that Peterman wanted to light with submersible units. No off-the-shelf units would fit in 6" of water and provide a 25' throw, so custom lights were built by Pace Technologies, whose team worked closely with first-unit assistant chief lighting technician Lou Ramos. "They managed to create waterproof 1,500-watt far-cyc units that did the job beautifully," Peterman says. "The round lights strung across both floors of the cave were practicals, tungsten bulbs with different colors on them. You'll also see some odd-shaped lights, which in the movie will look deep orange — those are also practicals, the Grinch's floor lamps, and they were 500-watt over-sized bulbs shaped like huge household bulbs. We had about five. We also had a semi-circle of 4-foot-by-2-foot Kino Flos, which lit up the ramp that led to the second floor. They gave a little cold glow on people and threw shadows on the wall to make things spooky. I also threw a lot of green backlight on the Grinch in the cave without justifying where it was coming from; we used green-gelled



The GRINCH
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STAGE 28

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY	DONALD PETERMAN ASC
CHIEF LIGHTING TECHNICIAN	GARY PALMER
CHIEF RIGGING TECHNICIAN	FRANK DOROWSKY
LIGHTING CONSOLE OPERATORS	DAVID SLODKI SCOTT BARNES

LEGEND

= 7K XENON
= 18Ks
= XENON LIGHT POOLS
= COOPS
=UNDERWATER
= 4' SINGLE
= 2' SINGLE
= 4X4 KINO
= 4X4 KINO VERTICAL
= 4X2 KINO
= 4X2 KINO VERTICAL

In addition to his elaborate lighting scheme, Peterman used atmospheric smoke to further enhance the cave set's ambience. "Controlling atmosphere-smoke is always difficult," the cinematographer says. "Sometimes the shafts of light would look great, but we couldn't see beyond them, so we'd have to wait for the smoke to clear a bit. By the end of the first week, I'd learned to smoke the cave very early in the day to give it a chance to settle down."

The set for the Grinch's cave stood three stories high, and most of it was modeled out of Styrofoam. Peterman made liberal use of Kino Flos in this set, using some of them to throw spooky shadows on the walls. "I also threw a lot of green backlight on the Grinch in the cave without justifying where it was coming from," he details. "Whenever the Grinch was around, I made sure there was a slightly green glow coming from him."

The Grinch
UNIVERSAL
STAGE 28

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY	DONALD PETERMAN ASC
CHIEF LIGHTING TECHNICIAN	GARY PALMER
CHIEF RIGGING TECHNICIAN	FRANK DOROWSKY
LIGHTING CONSOLE OPERATORS	DAVID SLODKI SCOTT BARNES

LEGEND

=UNDERWATER

= 4' SINGLE
= 2' SINGLE

= 4X4 KINO
= 4X4 KINO VERTICAL
= 4X2 KINO
= 4X2 KINO VERTICAL

Par lights, because we needed a powerful spot to hit him in that gigantic set! Whenever the Grinch was around, I made sure there was a slightly green glow coming from him."

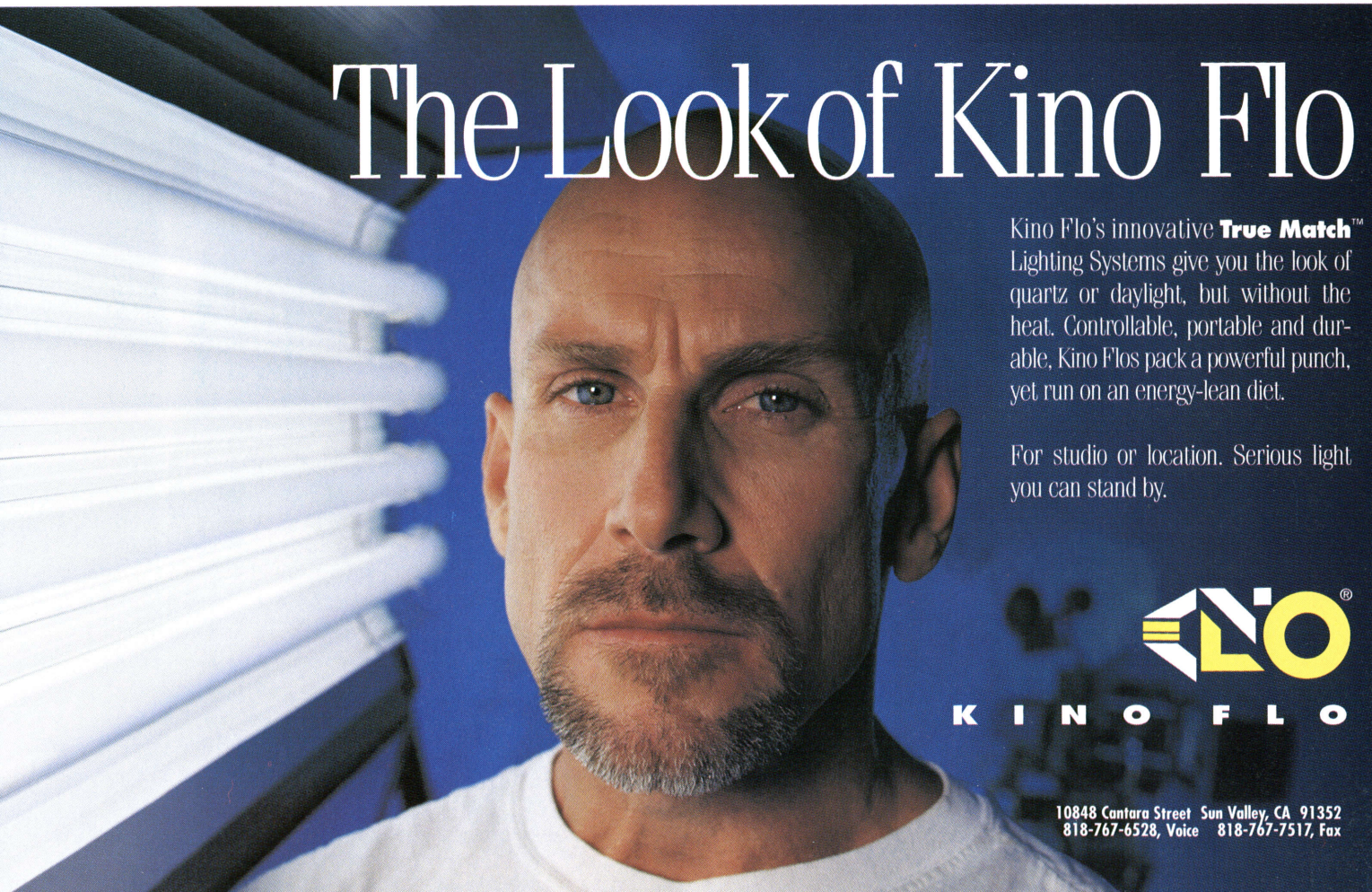
Like Whoville, the cave set was smoked with atmospheric mist, but inside the cave the technique caused some problems. "Controlling atmosphere-smoke is always difficult," Peterman says. "Sometimes the shafts of light would look great, but we couldn't see beyond them, so we'd have to wait for the smoke to clear a bit. By the end of the first week, I'd learned to smoke the cave very early in the day to give it a chance to settle down."

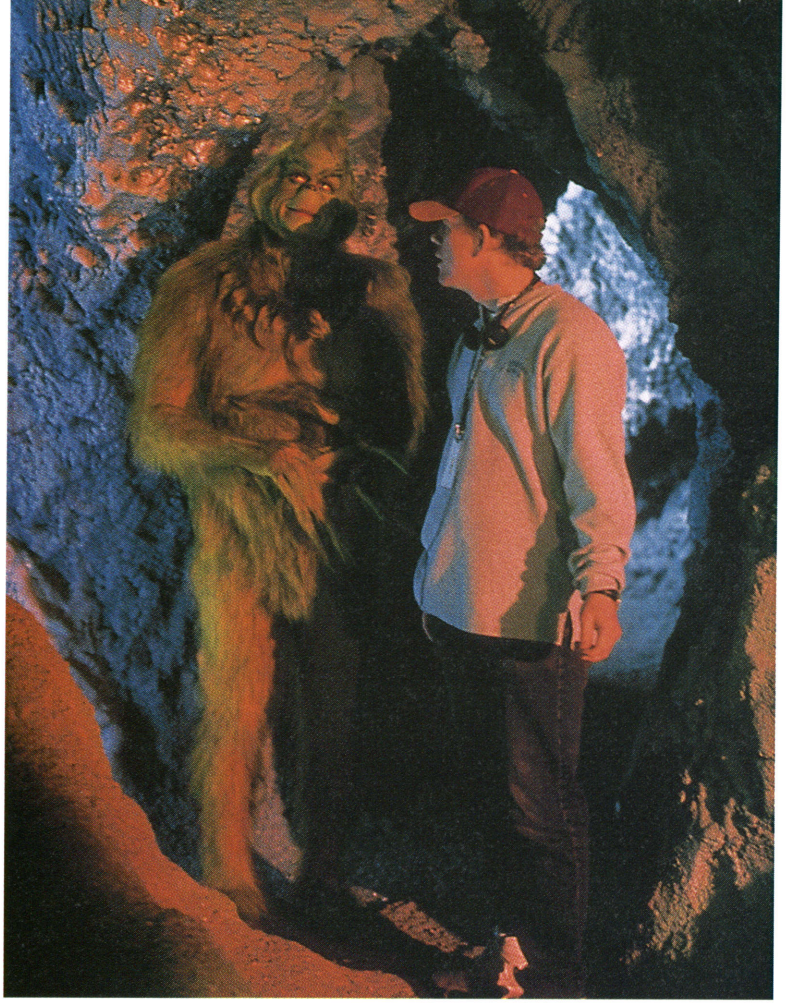
Perhaps the greatest challenge faced by the filmmakers was the Mount Crumpit set, an unforgiving pile of Styrofoam rock, synthetic crags and plastic boulders that was all but impassable to the camera crew. Key grip Mike Anderson finally conquered Mount Crumpit by using a suspended camera platform he helped design: a Panaflex Platinum on a Libra head was mounted on a Super Technocrane, which swung the camera high over the manmade terrain and put it wherever it needed to be.

Peterman describes another interesting move, a seamless blend of crane and Steadicam: "We put Steadicam operator Greg Smith on a big crane and took him from the ceiling all the way down to the floor, where he just stepped off the platform and walked right into a Whoville marching band. You think this big boom shot is going to end, but the camera just keeps moving right along with the actors. We did a lot of Steadicam and handheld shots because it just took too much time to lay track in those sets. The handheld shots were done with the Panavision Platinum and a 500-foot magazine. The operator on those was Ray de la Motte, who had a very good touch with 'Whoey' imagery."

Peterman's lab of choice for *The Grinch* was CFI, with whom he has collaborated on several major productions. He notes that lab contact Art Tostado and color timer Ron Scott have been invaluable contacts there.

With all of *Grinch*'s obstacles and strange challenges now behind him, the cinematographer says he will remember the production with great fondness. "It was a happy experience," he says. "The great thing about the lighting was that we could do anything we wanted! Ron stuck pretty close to the pictures in the book for costumes, hair and sets, but not for the lighting or camera angles. Who knows how Whoville is really supposed to be lit on film? We decided that for ourselves." ■





Staying True to Seuss

Director Ron Howard ascends Mount Crumpit to summon the Grinch from his cave.

Interview by Stephen Pizzello

Unit Photography by Ron Batzdorff

If any two icons seemed to be opposites, it would have to be director Ron Howard and the Grinch. Howard, made famous by his television roles as Opie Taylor on *The Andy Griffith Show* and Richie Cunningham on *Happy Days,* is known throughout Hollywood as one of the industry's nice guys, an earnest artist whose sincerity, upbeat personality and professional work ethic have earned him the respect and goodwill of his peers. On the other hand, the Grinch, who became a household name with his starring role in the classic Chuck Jones holiday cartoon *How the Grinch Stole Christmas,* continues to set a standard for cranky Yuletide behavior that few (save Ebenezer Scrooge) can ever hope to equal.

Of course, the Grinch's saving grace is that speck of emotion that still lurks within his abnormally small heart, and it's this tiny reservoir of feeling that allows audiences of all ages to savor the notorious curmudgeon's annual transformation into a shining savior of the Christmas tradition. This year, thanks to the Herculean efforts of Howard and his fellow filmmakers, viewers will be able to enjoy the Grinch on both the small *and* large screen.

For Howard, the project proved to be an irresistible challenge. In the past, the filmmaker has tackled a variety of other iconic topics, including extraterrestrials (*Cocoon*), mermaids (*Splash*), firefighters (*Backdraft*) and astronauts (*Apollo 13*), but he maintains that his latest venture involved the most daunting logistics. *The Grinch* required the use of 10 Universal Studios soundstages, each crammed with elaborate sets and dozens of extras decked out in fanciful costumes and makeup. Working closely with director of photography Don Peterman, ASC and the rest of his crew, Howard strove to stay true to the original vision of Dr. Seuss (a.k.a. Theodore Geisel) while wrapping an entirely new holiday gift for the Grinch's loyal fans.

Amid the project's hectic post-production phase, Howard graciously allowed *AC* to visit with him at the Imagine Entertainment bungalow on the Universal lot, in an office adorned with Seuss-inspired artwork and a bookshelf jammed with inspirational texts (*Buzz Aldrin: The Return, Norman Rockwell, The*

Photos courtesy of Universal Pictures.

Art of Richard Diebenkorn and, appropriately enough for someone working on a Seuss movie, *The Complete Rhyming Dictionary*). Casually clad in a sky-blue denim shirt, tan khakis and his trademark baseball cap (this one labeled "XIX Winter Olympics"), Howard proved to be both an affable and insightful subject.

***American Cinematographer:* When did you first see the original Grinch cartoon, and what was your reaction to it?**

Ron Howard: I'd actually read the book before I saw the cartoon, and I'd liked it a lot. I don't really remember when I first saw the cartoon, but it became a perennial favorite throughout my childhood. As I got older, I discovered that I wasn't the only one on the high-school basketball team who still watched the Grinch cartoon; it was beloved by pretty much everyone I knew.

Being an industry fixture, did you ever think to yourself, 'Boy, this would make a great live-action film'?

Howard: Never. When my partner [at Imagine Entertainment], Brian Grazer, first told me he was really excited about pursuing the rights, my initial reaction was that it would be too tough to pull off. But the way our company works is that if either of us has a lot of passion about something, the other one never throws up a barrier. I therefore helped as much as I could in Brian's effort to obtain the rights, and during that process I really began to embrace the idea that *The Grinch* could become a terrific live-action film, despite the fact that the book was so thin and the story so slight. In both *The Grinch* and Dr. Seuss's other books about the Whos, there were some good clues as to how we could further develop the story. That extrapolation process began bearing some entertaining fruit, and I quickly became fully immersed in the idea of making the film. I also became very territorial about the project; at that point, I certainly didn't want anyone else to direct the movie!

Quite frankly, the other big factor was that Jim Carrey wanted to do it. This was not a case of us developing a script and then casting it with the best people available. It was more of a kismet situation: we had an amazing idea for a film; Brian already had a good relationship with Jim after their experience together on *Liar, Liar;* and Jim and I had always wanted to work together. We suddenly found ourselves attracted to the same star in the sky, which was this notion of bringing the Grinch to life.

How did you ultimately obtain the rights to the story, which were owned by Theodore Geisel's widow?

Howard: Brian began pursuing the rights at a time when she wasn't interesting in selling them, but the idea always remained on his radar. One day, he suddenly heard that she was not only interested in selling the rights, but was actually holding meetings and listening to pitches. We got involved in that process, but the first pitch didn't work, so Brian and the folks at Universal asked if I would go in and pitch a new version. I began kicking ideas around with Brian, the people at Universal, my wife and others. The idea I came up with was pretty simple, and I felt that it stayed true to the essence of the book while expanding the story; basically, my concept used the book as the film's third act.

Eventually, I flew out to meet Mrs. Geisel, and she was in a very businesslike mode. *The Grinch* was one of her husband's important works, and she was extremely protective of it. Fortunately, she really liked our approach, and when she finally sold us the rights I remember being exhilarated — not only because we'd won the bidding war, but because I believed we were really onto something.

Of course, you now have to face Dr. Seuss's fans, who also have strong feelings about the Grinch.

Howard: Well, I hope we manage to live up to everyone's expectations. We certainly had very high expectations for ourselves, and I think we've been as protective of the book, the Grinch and the spirit of Dr. Seuss's work as anyone could have been. In fact, this was the second time in my career — the first being *Apollo 13* — where I felt that every member of the crew would go the extra mile not just for me or their paychecks,

Opposite: Howard consults with Jim Carrey in the Grinch's cave. This page: The director observes as the villainous Grinch gives Cindy-Lou Who (Taylor Momsen) a piece of his mind.

Staying True to Seuss

Howard gazes out over the faux peaks of Mount Crumpit, which is ostensibly three times higher than Mount Everest. Note the high lamp placement.

but because the story, the characters and the legacy demanded it. No one wanted to let the opportunity get away from them, so the quality control was very much generated within each and every artist who worked on the project.

Did you ever look at the 1953 film *The 5,000 Fingers of Dr. T,* which is the only other live-action feature based on a Dr. Seuss story?

Howard: I have a tape of it at my house, but I never got around to watching it. At any rate, I knew I didn't want to go in that sort of heavily expressionistic direction. I kind of stayed away from the cartoon as well, because I didn't want to do the same jokes. We just kept going back to the book as our main resource. We did use the songs "Welcome Christmas" and "You're a Mean One"; those were our odes to the animated version. A lot of the appeal of the cartoon rests on the great voiceover by Boris Karloff and the antics of Max the dog, who really steals the show. Our version is narrated by Anthony Hopkins, and while we had a real dog who could do some great things, we didn't turn him into a cartoon.

As our script evolved, the most fun aspect of it was this bent, psychological case study of the Grinch. We tried to address the obvious questions: for example, why the cave? The Grinch is a great modern antihero because he's wound so tight and has so much dimension.

I suppose your primary challenge on the film was translating the two-dimensional drawings in the Seuss books to a three-dimensional visual design. Did you storyboard most of the picture?

Howard: Yes. In addition, [children's book artist] Lane Smith did some early illustrations in which he created various views of a Seussian world. He worked in his own style rather than copying Theodore Geisel's style, and the results were both interesting and inspiring.

Our production designer, Michael Corenblith, with whom I'd previously worked on *Apollo 13, Ransom* and *Ed TV,* is extremely thorough and incredibly diligent. Everything I'd done with him had been of this world, and he'd done a great job of achieving reality, so I didn't really know if he was the right candidate to take the leap into this whimsical world and bring it to life. We had a very frank conversation about it, and during that meeting he showed me some architectural books, including one that featured the work of the Spanish architect Gaudi. As we looked at it, page by page, I kept saying, 'Hmm, that's *very* Seussian.' During our later research, we discovered that Geisel may have actually been influenced by Gaudi, and that the two may have shared some other influences as well. We began to view Gaudi's work as our day-to-day, real-life, three-dimensional basis for Whoville, and we decided not to make Whoville an expressionistic, surreal world, but rather a very whimsical, very odd place that you believed could function. As a result, we wanted to follow the 'no right angles' rule in building all of our sets.

Also, when you look at Dr. Seuss's illustrations, there seem to be other physical laws at work. His characters have a great sense of balance; they're always riding around on

unicycles or holding big objects with one finger, but somehow you still believe it. To add that sense to the film, we cast a lot of street performers and Cirque du Soleil veterans to do their thing in the backgrounds of scenes. The film is not full of stunts, because I didn't want to have a circus right there in the foreground, but there's a lot of wire work and other intricate details behind the main action. I just wanted Whoville to seem a bit skewed and rather strange.

Was that also why you opted to use dutch angles in combination with camera movement?

Howard: Yes. Don Peterman and I came up with that idea while we were doing camera tests. We never wanted things to seem too stationary in the frame; we always wanted to dutch the frame and add a bit of gentle roll. I was actually applying some of the tricks that we'd used on some of the close-ups of the astronauts in *Apollo 13*. To get that outer-space feeling of zero gravity, every shot was dutched with a little bit of motion, and after awhile we sort of stopped thinking in terms of right angles. We tried to do that in a subtle way on *The Grinch* so that the actors wouldn't be burdened with the task of leaning in strange ways while delivering their dialogue.

Don took that notion a step further by pushing me to use wider and wider lenses on shots where I never would have considered using them before. We wanted to show off the sets, and we also wanted to hint at a kind of illustrative, cartoony feel; the wide lenses really helped to make things funnier. Don also began working with patterned lights on the walls. During our initial tests, I thought that idea might be too impressionistic or too overtly odd, but as we started working we began to realize that we were really creating our own logic and look. Whereas Dr. Seuss's drawings are two-dimensional and static on the page, we wanted to offer as much depth as we

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Staying True to Seuss

Howard and producer Brian Grazer get down to business in Whoville.

could. We felt that if we were consistent in applying all of these techniques, the overall effect could be very effective. It could liberate us from this world and help us create a sort of parallel universe.

Is it true that you had some discussions with George Lucas about using 1950s-style props?

Howard: I didn't talk to George so much about the Fifties; that was something that evolved from looking at the book over and over again. The book was published in 1957, and there are some clues in a kitchen that's shown, where it says "General Wholectric" over the refrigerator. Also, the utensils on the counter and around the kitchen are very evocative of the Fifties. They're only slightly skewed. In the Grinch's world, we wanted things to look sort of kluged together, but in Whoville we wanted the props to look manufactured. Due to budgetary restrictions, we simply couldn't make everything from scratch, yet every single prop was a design issue. One day I brought that up with George. He told me, 'On *Star Wars* we used European utensils and other items from the early 20th century. North American audiences hadn't seen many of those, so they seemed a bit unusual to begin with. We then tweaked them further to turn them into something altogether different. But if you start with real items, they'll still look functional no matter what you do to them.' I thought that was a great approach to the problem. It's good to have savvy advisers!

How would you assess Don Peterman's input and your relationship with him on the set?

Howard: I hadn't worked with him in 13 or 14 years, and he was coming off of a horrible accident [on the set of *Mighty Joe Young*]. *The Grinch* was kind of a comeback film for him, and I was pleased to see how energetic and passionate he still was. He made wonderful creative contributions.

In terms of our relationship on the set, I'm not a very technical person, but I've learned enough to be able to relate to what the cinematographer's doing, and to ensure that there won't be a hazy cloud hovering over my directorial decisions. I love trying to create an environment where everyone's creatively pulling in the same direction and tossing out ideas.

Of course, this movie wasn't always fun and games. We shot for around 90 days, which was not bad, but a lot of it was challenging.

How did *The Grinch* compare to your past films in terms of the filmmaking logistics?

Howard: As a director, this film was definitely the biggest chal-

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lenge I've ever faced. *Apollo 13* was daunting, *Backdraft* was tricky, and I also learned a lot on *Willow,* but *The Grinch* had a visual trick in almost every shot. Still, I don't like to be too blatant with those tricks, and I don't like the photography and the stylistic choices to overtake and overpower the characters. One of this project's biggest virtues was that it wasn't a computer-generated movie with CG characters; it's a performance movie. And it's not just the genius of Jim Carrey on display — we also have Bill Irwin, Christine Baranski, Jeffrey Tambor, Molly Shannon, little Taylor Momsen and my brother Clint. We had good, interesting actors who were working well together, so I didn't want the style of the movie to overshadow what they were doing, which I thought was worth paying attention to.

Did you block scenes specifically to give Jim Carrey more room to roam in the frame?

Howard: Jim turned out to be an interesting sort of paradox. On the one hand, he's very freethinking and freewheeling, but on the other hand, he's extremely disciplined — he knows how to work with the camera. He was enthralled by the look that Don Peterman was getting and the lens choices we were making, and he was totally cooperative. When you're dealing with that kind of comic dynamo, you expect him to say, 'I need my room, I need my space; I don't know where I'm going to go, so just stay with me, baby.' But that wasn't the way it went. Jim wanted that kind of latitude during rehearsals in order to help him explore the physical side of the character, and he was pretty amazing. But he loved the fact that instead of just lying back and shooting him in wide shots, I was trying to work with the camera and give the story a more specific visual shape. Sometimes that approach could be frustrating because it meant extra takes, but there were other times when I did lie back with the camera because the scene called for it.

How did Rick Baker's extensive Grinch makeup affect Carrey's performance, as well as your approach to his scenes?

Howard: Jim had the ability to inhabit the makeup and his costume, to sort of fuse with it. He was incredibly expressive, and he was able to exploit the full dynamic range of the Grinch's emotional state. In my opinion, his performance is unparalleled for an actor in full makeup. At first I thought we'd only be doing shots from the waist up, but we often wound up doing a surprising number of tight close-ups because Jim was so compelling.

Is there any truth to the rumor that you directed for an

entire day in the Grinch makeup and costume?

Howard: I did don the suit; I was sort of teased into it. Jim kept saying, '*You* should try it sometime.' Then my brother Clint started baiting me, and at that point I couldn't let it go. So one day, without telling anyone, I showed up at 3:30 a.m. to make sure I could hit the 7:30 set call in full makeup. I surprised the hell out of everyone, and Jim loved the fact that I'd done it. I'll tell you, it's one thing to muscle through one day in that suit, but Jim did it about 70 times — and I wasn't even wearing the contact lenses, which were brutal. It was a huge physical chore for Jim, and he had his ups and downs, but he never compromised the look or the character in favor of his own comfort. ■

The director addresses his troops, many of whom are decked out in fanciful costumes designed by Rita Ryack.

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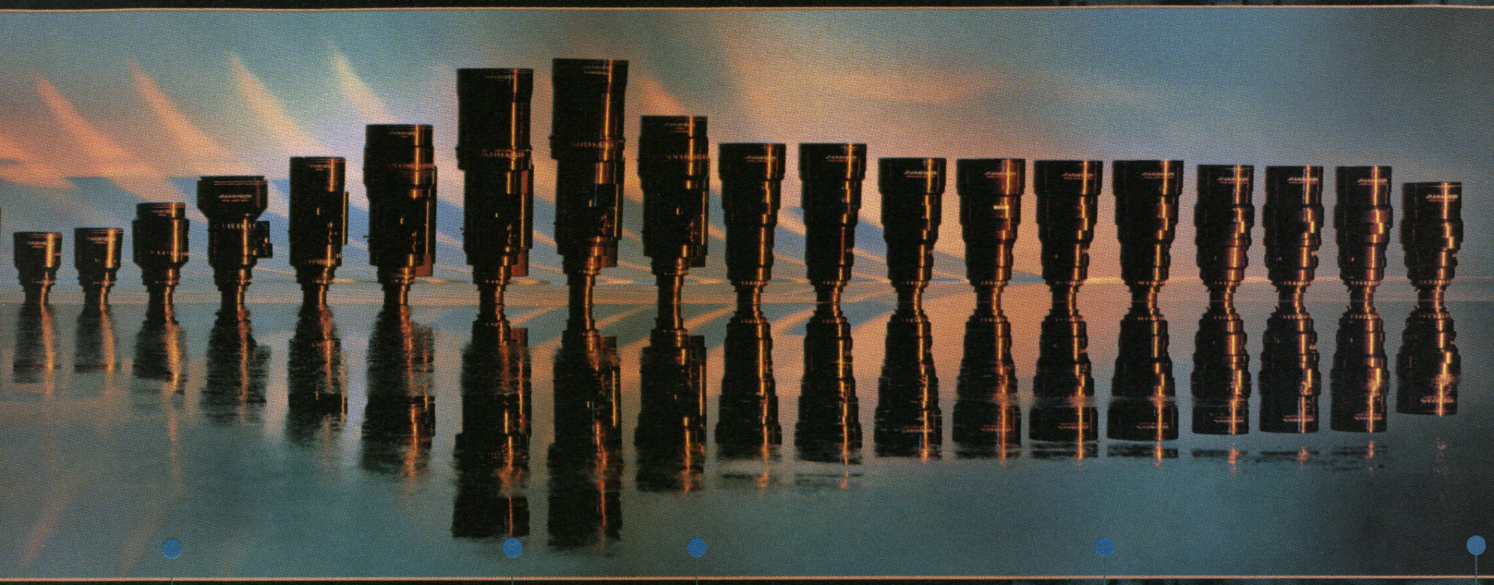

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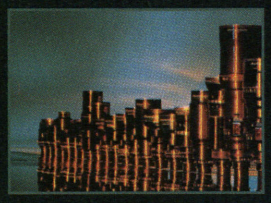

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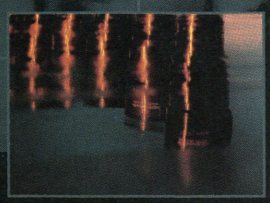

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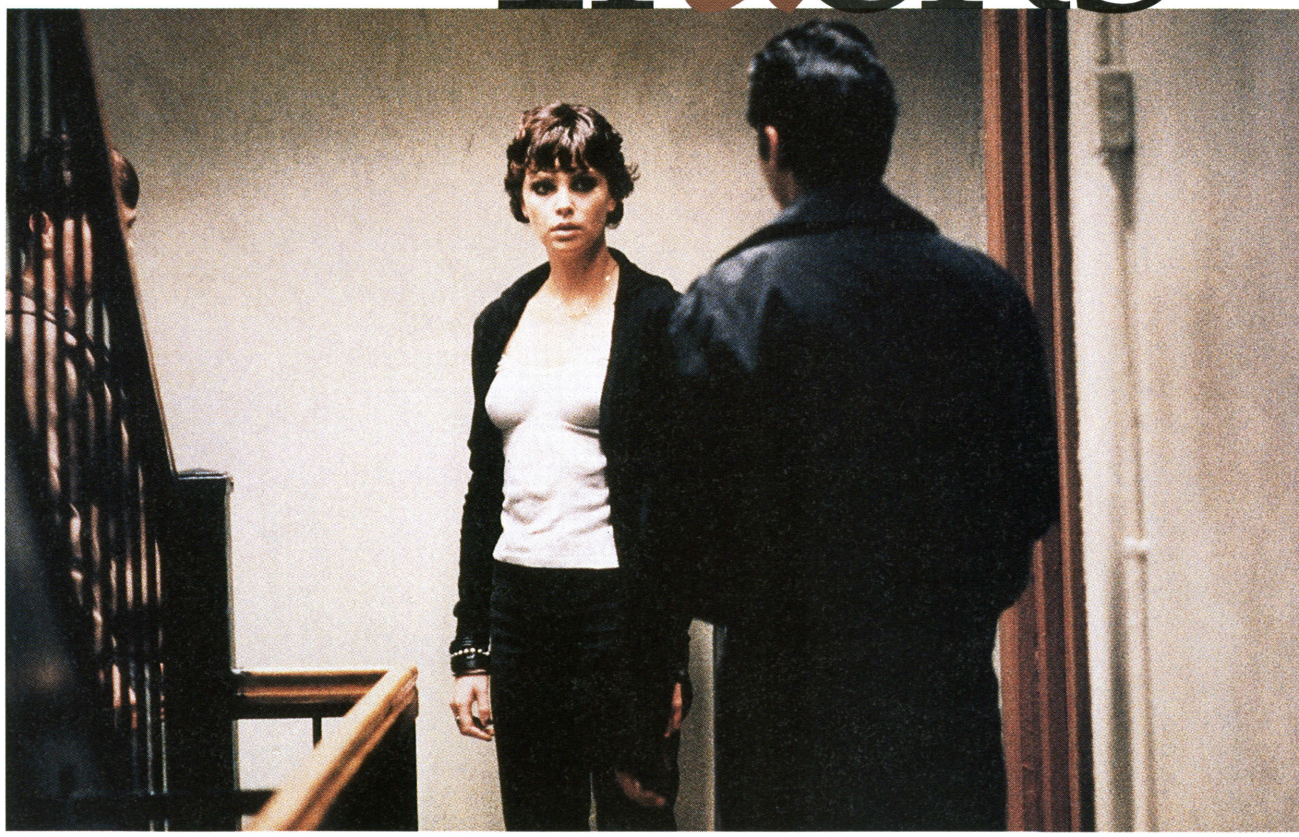

Photos courtesy of Miramax Films

Director James Gray and cinematographer Harris Savides, ASC create a timeless look for *The Yards*, a striking drama about a group of New Yorkers struggling to find their niche in the modern world.

by Jay Holben

Unit Photography by Sam Levy, Eric Liebowitz and Barry Wetcher

The urban drama *The Yards* is set in the vast New York City subway yards, an industrial waystation for constructing and repairing the city's seemingly endless supply of Metro cars. In fashioning the tale, director/writer James Gray turned to stories his father had told him, as well as his own experiences growing up in New York. Set in the present day, as an era defined by manufacturing is replaced by the sanitized world of the information superhighway, *The Yards* takes an intimate look at characters who held their own in the manufacturing age but are struggling to find their places in this "new world."

It has been five years since Gray made his critically acclaimed writing/directing debut with *Little Odessa*. "I was very lucky," Gray says. "For some reason that I could never explain, the film I made in school was extremely well-received. From that small success I was able to get an agent and producers on my side. Although I was sent a number of scripts, none of them particularly appealed to me, so I sat down and

wrote my own, which became *Little Odessa*."

Cinematographer Harris Savides, ASC was a passionate fan of *Little Odessa* and told his agent he would love to work with Gray on a project. "I was familiar with a good deal of Harris's work and had received some absolutely glowing recommendations from people he had worked with, but above all, he was passionate about this project," Gray recalls. "That is of paramount importance, [and] it goes for casting or filling any key position on a film — if you get someone who is passionate about the material, [he or she] will bring love and care to the overall project. Plus, Harris seemed totally into some of the crazy ideas I was throwing out there from the start! I tend to get very pretentious and high-falutin' about things like my philosophy of style for the movie, and he was very open to that kind of discussion."

Some of Gray's "high-falutin'" ideas included a trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art to examine paintings by such artists as Caravaggio, Hopper and de La Tour. Gray also sent a good deal of music to Harris to demonstrate the emotional feel he was looking for in a particular scene. "Music is very important to him," says Savides. "He would send it to me, or I would go over to his place and he would play me a piece of an opera and tell me to imagine it without the singing. It was a great tool, a very evocative way to try and envision the scenes."

During preproduction, Gray also painted more than 40 watercolors depicting scenes from the script. "I'll do a painting for each scene in the script, which is what's essentially in my mind's eye. I don't expect the movie to look exactly like each watercolor. Instead, the idea is that they're a kind of motivational tool. The movie ultimately becomes an enlargement of your original vision, not just what you originally had in

Opposite page: Erica (Charlize Theron) finds herself in the midst of some dodgy dealings. This page, top: Savides used a good deal of backlight to silhouette the characters in night scenes. This sequence, shot at the actual Yards in New York, was played out mostly in long, wide shots to take in the expanse of the setting as thugs working for Frank (James Caan) sabotage the competition. Center: Leo (Mark Wahlberg), in hiding after being accused of murdering a subway officer, meets with Frank to discuss his options. Savides used a number of 20K tungsten sources with computer-controlled louver doors to create the effect of light moving through the empty warehouse. Bottom: Savides maintained the silhouette technique for this scene, in which the thugs gather to enact their dirty deeds. A pair of 5K Fresnels in a Condor served as the primary source backlighting the characters.

Switching Tracks

At the onset of the film, as Leo is paroled from prison, his best friend, Willie (Joaquin Phoenix) and his former girlfriend, Erica (Theron) – now on Willie's arm – head out for a night of celebration. The club was lit almost entirely with batten strips converted to "covered wagons" by creating a chickenwire frame over the bare globes and covering the frame with 1000H tracing paper. Some wagons were also hidden amid the ceiling beams to create some top sources.

mind."

Gray and Savides also watched a mini film festival of prints that approximated the look Gray had in mind for *The Yards*. Among the films they screened were Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Conformist*, William Friedkin's *The French Connection* and Luchino Visconti's *Rocco and His Brothers* and *The Leopard*. "We watched all of those films because our intent with *The Yards* was to make it look very unlike any other movies that are out right now," Gray explains. "These [characters] are people that inhabit a world that's quickly dying. I wanted to do justice to that sense of trying to hold on to a particular time, so the overall look needed to be nostalgia for a better time. We wanted to make it very much a 20th-century movie."

Savides recalls, "James and I began talking about what film was like in the Seventies; the colors had a certain quality that doesn't exist today, and there was a certain lack of definition [in the imagery]. Kodak has done an extraordinary job with its new film stocks, but they're almost too sharp and too saturated. Every time they come out with a new emulsion, it's more vivid and sharper, and they make it harder to destroy the film!

"I think the imagery has to evoke an emotion in the audience; it can't just be there for the sake of imagery alone," he continues. "By making the film softer and applying a kind of patina to it, we were trying to take the audience along with this particular story."

To do that, the director and cinematographer decided to "beat the film up a little bit," according to Gray. "We wanted the blacks to be painterly, a kind of burnished brown. In painting, they say never use black out of the tube, because there is no absolute black in life, only shades of gray. We tried to follow that same rule with the movie and make it look like a series of paintings.

"That idea also applied to the grain structure and color palette," Gray continues. "We wanted to see the grain, to be able to add the 'film' quality and eliminate that electronic clarity that seems to be so prevalent in today's films. Harris and I joked quite a bit about one of Burt Lancaster's lines from *The Leopard*, when he talks about the 'voluptuousness of death.' That phrase really struck me, and it became the general catch-phrase for the look we wanted: all of the skin tones would have a kind of burnished-bronze look to endorse the idea of a certain beauty and tranquillity in this world. The story is so brutal and brooding that filling it with deep, slick blue shafts of light would overdramatize the iciness of the story. In a sense, we wanted to create a world that was as oddly beautiful and voluptuous as it was dark."

"James wanted the film to have a quality that would make it look as if *something* was going to happen all the time," agrees Savides. "We wanted the picture to look like something that wasn't shot today. That doesn't necessarily mean it's a period film — people are driving new cars and using cell phones — but it has the feel of being shot in the late Sixties or early Seventies, and that was a blast to achieve."

"It was very difficult, because we were trying to turn the hands of the clock back a little bit," says Gray. "We never intended to make a period film, but I feel like most movies are too current. If you look around

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Switching Tracks

Director Gray peers through the lens as Savides makes a point. "When I heard that Harris was interested in the project, I spoke to a couple of people who knew him and had worked with him – [including] director Mark Romanek, who had collaborated with Harris on a lot of music videos," Gray recalls. "Mark said to me, 'Oh My God – you have to work with him, he's the greatest!' When I met with Harris, I immediately loved him and thought he was, indeed, the greatest."

where real people live, they've generally furnished their homes with older furniture. Most people don't buy 1999 or 2000 furniture. In fact, the apartment that Leo [Mark Wahlberg] and his mother [Ellen Burstyn] live in is patterned exactly after a real apartment, yet you'd swear it looks like something out of 1969. But the reason is that people — especially working-class or poorer people — tend not to be able to afford the most current things. Even if they can, they don't necessarily have that taste. But in movies, [characters] always have the newest thing! Productions get products for free to use in the movie and companies aren't donating old stuff, so everyone lives in fancy places with totally current things. That's not the way I perceive that real people live, so even though *The Yards* has an oddly period feel, I feel that it's closer to reality than most films."

One of the key components to achieving the "voluptuousness of death" was underexposing Kodak Vision 320T 5277 by at least 1 ½ stops, and at times by as much as 2 ½ stops. The filmmakers also push-processed the emulsion in the lab. "That put us down on the toe of the film, creating a muted contrast — a kind of pallor that made for very non-vivid photography," explains Savides. "We didn't want the edges too defined, the colors too saturated, the contrast too extreme or the skin tones too perfect. At the same time, we were walking a fine line in an area just before gross underexposure, where the film can become really beautiful. It was difficult; sometimes we went too far and it became mush, and sometimes we didn't go far enough.

"I'm a bit neurotic about how I take my meter readings," the cinematographer confesses. "When I was underexposing by 1 ½ stops on 77, I wouldn't set my meter at 1,200 ISO, but rather somewhere around 500, and I'd do the calculations in my head based on the tones in the scene. I'd look at the scene and figure out where I had the latitude to really push the stock. It all depended on what was there, on the wardrobe the actors were wearing, as well as the location — was it something that could take a lot of underexposure and still work out?

"I'd look at skin tones and visualize how dark they could go," he continues. "If an actor was in dark clothing, but there was a light background, I'd take that into consideration and maybe underexpose even further for that shot because I had the ratio of values in the scene to support it. It all becomes a matter of visualizing where I want to put my values. I didn't ever want my values at the 'normal' point — I wanted them under normal, and sometimes I could look at the scene and say 'I can go even further underexposed here because everything is a lighter tone.'"

Savides says he was never very precise with meter readings during this process. "Actually, I very rarely am," he admits. "I think sometimes the best work comes when you don't look at the meter, but put the exposure where you feel is best. I don't think you can be too precious with photography [because] then it can become a very technical exercise. I prefer to approach the image in a much more instinctual way. If my meter is saying 'no,' I just might go there and follow my gut, and sometimes the best work comes out of that. This movie has a lot of that approach in it."

The desire to capture a voluptuous look extended not only to the film's exposure methods, but also to the art direction and costume design. The film's color palette was limited to tertiary colors only; primary colors, as well as their secondaries, were completely eliminated. "All of the colors we used were third-removed from primary: browns, oranges, pale greens," says Savides. "That was a mandate in all departments. We also took that into consideration when we were choosing our locations; we tried to find that perfect quality of 'Brooklyn hallway green' for the primary locations."

Adds Gray, "There were no blues in the film at all, really, just a series of ochres, browns, oranges and a little bit of mint green. We carefully avoided blue because it tends to have an overt vibrancy that stands out very quickly. I wanted this film to have an almost stately kind of beauty; I didn't want something that attacked you, but rather something that was obsessed with subtlety.

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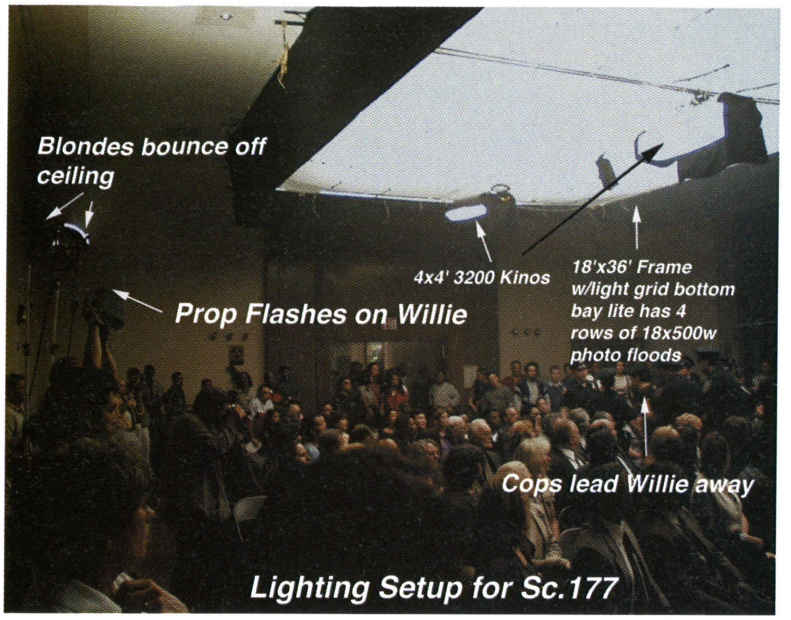
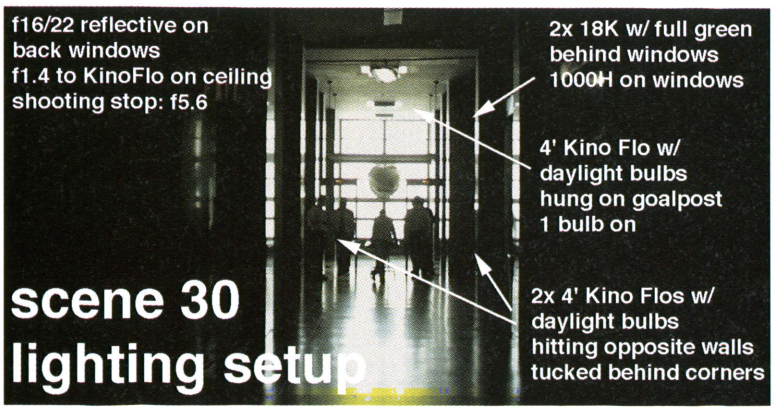


Savides used carefully labeled digital reference photos, taken by assistant Sam Levy, to record his lighting setups for the film. In the scene shown at right, he used a large soft toplight and supplemental units to create the feeling of overhead fluorescent lighting in an industrial building. Below: As Leo begins working for Uncle Frank, Willie explains the deep politics of the New York subway system. Two 18K HMIs with Full Plus Green on them stand behind the 1000H draping the background windows. The back windows were 3½ stops (reflected) over key. The Kino Flo above the guard station serve to bring the light in from the window, and a 4x4 Kino Flo was also hung in the corner above the windows. By carefully cutting the light off the walls, Savides could very naturally extend the window light farther into the room, while at the same time allowing some soft toplight to better model the performers.

"Toward that end," Gray continues, "our first priority was to not let the camera movement and the explosiveness of style ever get in the way of what the actors were doing. *The Yards* is a character movie first, and a camera movie second. At the same time, we tried to place the actors in kind of beautiful tableaux so that the blocking of the movie stayed very simple.

"Harris and I said from the beginning that we wanted this film to be simple, but not easy. If you look back at great directors like John Ford and break down what he's doing, the frame is very simple. It's almost like fine ballet, where the dancers make it look so simple, but anyone who's ever tried it knows it's anything but. I don't want the camera to get in the way of emotions, and in that way, I suppose this film is very classically styled."

Further refining the look, Savides and Gray decided to shoot this intimate drama with anamorphic lenses to accentuate the changing environment around the characters and their attendant struggles. Savides says he chose the Panavision C-Series anamorphic lenses instead of the Primo anamorphic series because "they are simpler lenses and they have a beautiful, soft quality. They flare much more easily than the Primos, which tends to add an overall veiling to the image. There is a considerable contrast difference between the Primos and the C-series lenses; that flaring tends to milk the image up, and it is just one more step we took in breaking down the vividness of the image and getting the final film to look the way films did in the Sixties and Seventies. In addition, I found that the C-series lenses resolve very differently at the different T-stops, so much so that the look completely changed if I stopped down to a 4 as opposed to a 2.8. I therefore tried to keep all of the shoot in the same T-stop range to maintain a consistent look."



Gray says that choosing the specific lens for a sequence one of his favorite aspects of any shoot. "Choosing the lens is the equivalent of choosing your paintbrush," he offers. "My taste generally tends to be in the 'normal' lens range, but the funny thing is that there are no real 'normal' lenses in anamorphic. Anamorphic is so screwed up, so bizarre, but I love the way it looks because it has a certain abstract quality to it. The level of distortion and what the lenses do with flares is absolutely beautiful. The proximal patterns created within each shot are what really interest me, and for *The Yards*, I tended to use the 75 or 100mm lenses almost exclusively."

Of course, the overall pastiness of the film's imagery was also achieved via Savides's careful use of lighting. The cinematographer recalls, "When we were wandering through the Metropolitan Museum and studying paintings, we kept gravitating to the works of Caravaggio and de La Tour, [which have] a certain quality of candlelight on people's faces that is kind of haunting and beautiful. We wanted to translate that quality into our lighting scheme for the film, and we used a lot of single-source light and very soft toplight to achieve that feel.

"We also used a lot of Mus-Balls. They're like Chinese lanterns [sometimes also known as China balls], but they're made out of muslin as opposed to rice or tracing

paper," he details. "Most of the Mus-Balls were probably 30 inches in diameter, and we had three sockets in each where I would put various globes. The muslin we used to make the Mus-Balls was very thick, so I often went with three PH-213 globes inside each of them. Sometimes I would change that order and put one blue 200W BCA in there, just to screw it up a little and make it a bit off, not so pure a source. Or I would put a 211 in one of the sockets and then swing the ball around so that the 211 was the bulb that was closest to talent and the two 213s were

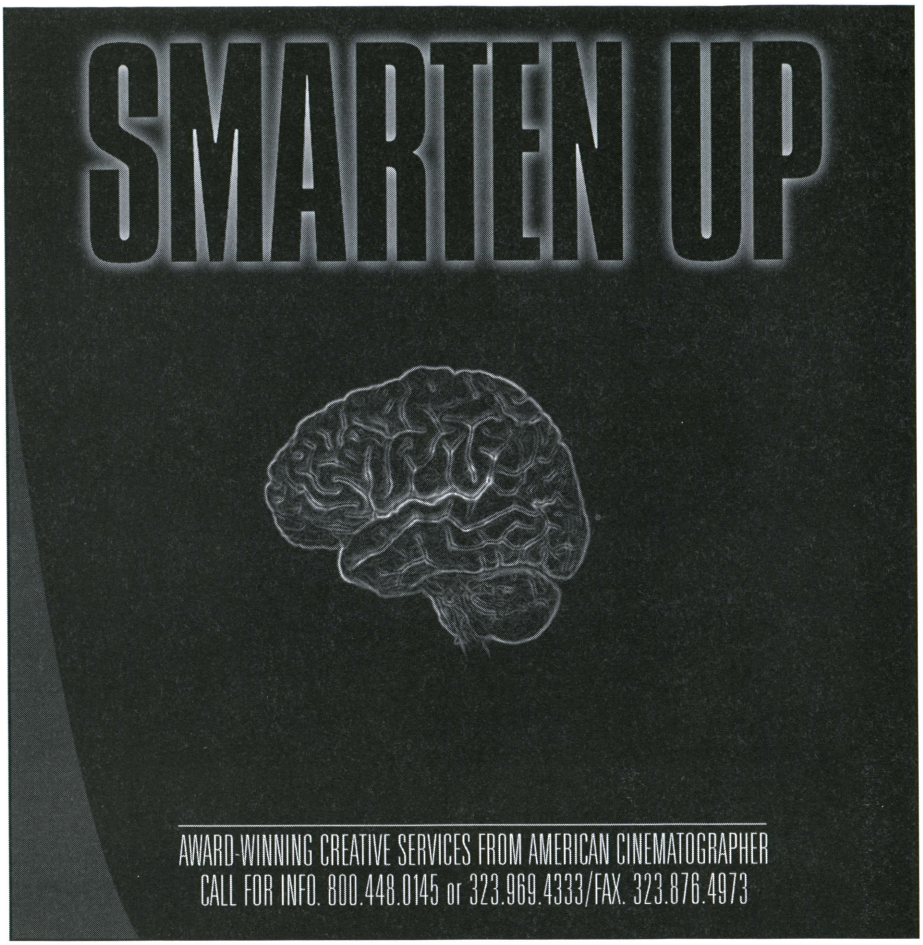
"I don't feel as if I have a definite style. I never look at a movie as something I am going to do my 'thing' on."

— Harris Savides, ASC

farther away. I can't tell you exactly what that did to the light, but I know the quality changed subtly and I liked it much better.

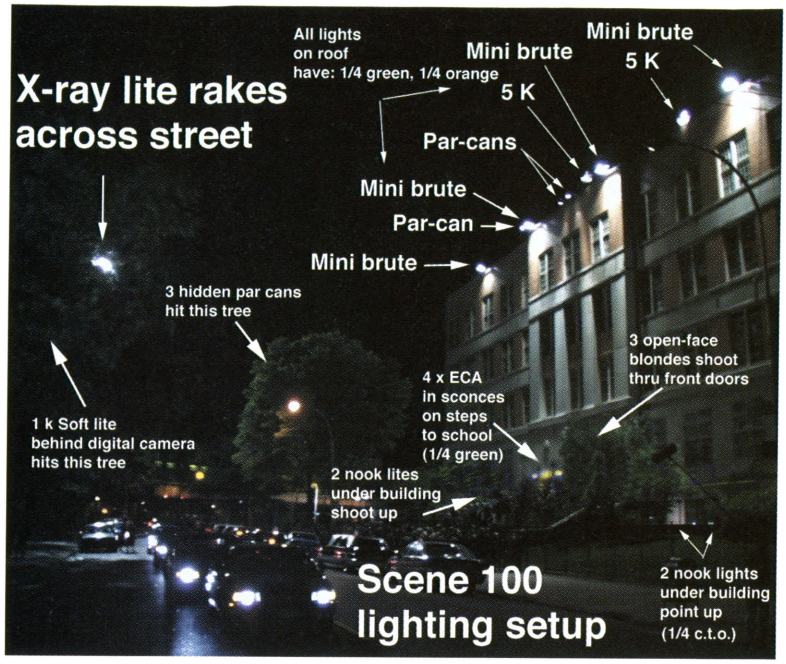
"I try to avoid lighting people," Savides continues. "My philosophy is to light the scene and let the people be in it, because in the world people aren't carefully lit. When you go to a party, not everyone is in perfect light, and I kind of live with the mandate that my work will have much more of a grounding in reality than fantasy."

In line with this philosophy, Savides would often work to combine sources and create impure sources of light. In one sequence in the film, the three main characters, Leo, Willie (Joaquin Phoenix) and Erica (Charlize Theron), venture into a golden-hued nightclub. Savides used sources all around the perimeter of the room on the floor to provide uplighting on all of the walls. Instead of employing the ever-popular Kino Flo for this task, Savides turned to batten strips, long strips of 3" wood with several porcelain sockets screwed into them. He staggered bulbs of differing strengths and



Switching Tracks

"In this scene, were working to create a realistic night exterior for the party sequence," Savides recalls. "The lamps on the roof – the Par cans, 5Ks and Mini-Brutes – all have ¼ Plus Green and CTO on them to match the sodium-vapor look. We used the 1K Zips to bring up the trees and add more definition to the shot. The X-Ray is pretty much like a Maxi-Brute. We weren't going for anything flashy, just realistic architectural lighting on the building."



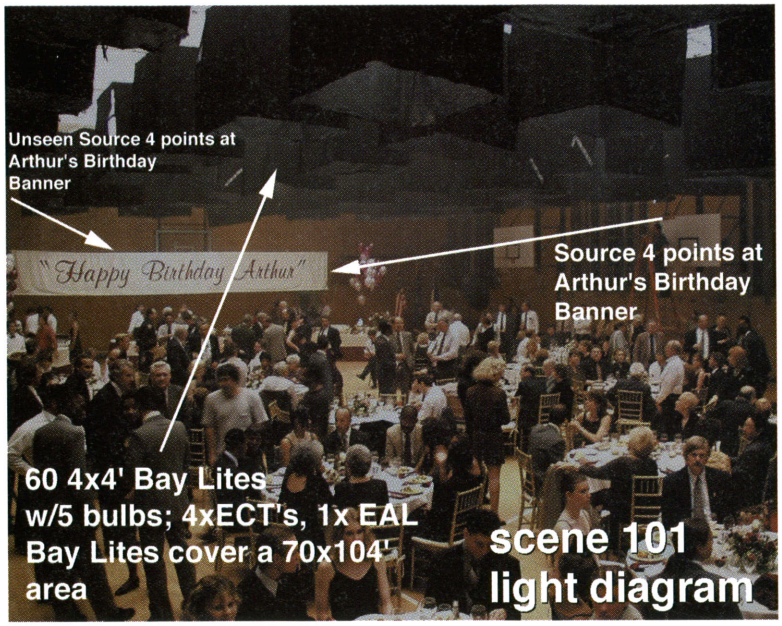
color-temperatures in these strips to create natural-looking glows on the walls. "I love Kino Flos," he asserts, "but I tend to use a lot of batten strips because I like to mix up the bulbs. Kino Flos are even and kind of flat through the whole length of the tube, but if you put a 25-watt bulb next to a 100-watt bulb, the light has a realistic differential to it — it's not all one even field of illumination. Sometimes I'll unscrew some bulbs to change the quality of the source a bit, or throw a different wattage right in the middle of the strip; it's a quick way to light something with a bit more fine control when you have to work really fast."

Savides worked with this same concept for a courtroom scene involving the troubled Leo and his mother. "We couldn't really do anything to the facility itself, and the architecture provided very few options. There was nothing to clamp onto and nothing to hide behind, and we were going to see quite a bit of the set in there. We eventually decided to pull the air vents from the ceiling and run lines through the vents to tie off on the roof. We supported a 20-by-20 frame, and we lined string lights — long wires with intermittent sockets — all across the frame. We laced them across the open 20-by-20 frame in four rows of

18 sockets, and put 500-watt bulbs in each socket. Then we put another 20-by-20 frame up below the lights and skinned that with a light gridcloth to create a large, lightweight, overhead Baylite. It worked fantastically for the scene."

He adds, "We did a lot of lighting by putting things on the edge of the light beam — right on the fringe of the field-angle as opposed to centering the beam on the subject. We'd focus the light on the center of the scene and then pan it left or tilt it away so that the scene was on the edge of the beam. That created a much more realistic quality than straight-on hard light or light aimed through diffusion."

Savides feels that *The Yards* was a unique departure from much of the work he has done in music videos and commercials. "I don't feel as if I have a definite style. I never look at a movie as something I am going to do my 'thing' on. For *The Yards*, I did almost everything I could to forget my past work on music videos and commercials, and instead tell a subtle story through carefully chosen simplicity. There is nothing flashy about this film at all. We wanted it to have a bit of elegance but not be gimmicky, and I tried to work however I could to rock that particular boat. I don't think photography should draw attention to itself — it's part of the story." ■



For the party sequence interior, set in a large banquet hall, Savides hung 60 4x4 diffusion frames with five lamp sockets in each. Each bay light was then lamped with 4 ECTs (500W 3200K) and 1 EAL (500W 3300K). The overhead soft sources were the only illumination used for the sequence. Bounce-fill cards were periodically brought in to sweeten the look a bit, but no units were used from the floor.

Televisionaries

From left to right (standing): Hugo Cortina; Hiro Narita, ASC; Tony Askins, ASC; Thomas A. Del Ruth, ASC; Buddy Squires; Allen Moore; and Michael Zakula, Manager, Eastman Kodak; (I to r seated) Brian Spruill, Vice President, Eastman Kodak; Michael Gershman; Mike Berlin; and Peter Smokler

AC profiles the 2000 Emmy Award nominees for Best Cinematography.

by Jean Oppenheimer and David Heuring

Television cinematographers are creating ever-bolder imagery by taking higher risks normally associated with TV's much larger counterpart, the silver screen. This year's Emmy nominees pushed the envelope further by testing the limits of film stocks, photographing with darker, more dramatic lighting, and increasing the complexity of their camera movements. These artistic elements, normally reserved for dramas and movies of the week, have found their way into situation comedies, that longtime hotbed of high-key illumination, as evidenced in three of the series nominations.

Whatever the subject matter may be, each nominated cinematographer strove to create a certain mood to present to audiences, and they were granted the freedom to experiment with techniques that would help to accentuate those appropriate moods.

Competition in the field of television cinematography expanded this year with the addition of a new category: Outstanding Cinematography for a Multi-Camera Series. At long last, the directors of photography who shoot these shows will now be recognized for their contributions.

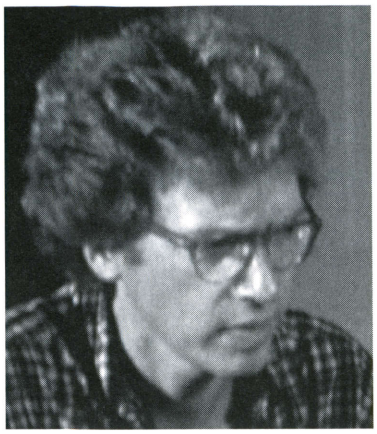
AC asked nominees in all three categories to highlight a few aspects of their approach to the nominated productions.

OUTSTANDING CINEMATOGRAPHY FOR A SINGLE-CAMERA SERIES

Phil Abraham
The Sopranos
"D-Girl"

Director of Photography Phil Abraham aims for a strong sense of both mood and naturalism on the popular HBO mob series *The Sopranos,* which has a style that's simultaneously menacing and darkly comic. Although the show's standing sets are pre-rigged, the cameraman likes to alter the lighting depending

Photo by Merritt Smith



upon the emotional demands of the scene. For the nominated episode "D-Girl," he decided to try something a bit different in one of the main sets, the Sopranos' kitchen.

The episode involves a confrontation between Tony and Christopher after Tony gets wind of the fact his nephew is collaborating on a screenplay about the Mafia. The daytime scene takes place in the kitchen, which is usually brightly lit. The two men are alone, although a big party is going on in the living room nearby. "Normally we have strip lights around the perimeter of the kitchen, wooden troughs with standard household bulbs in them," says Abraham. "Each trough is on double circuits and all of the lights are on dimmers. That way we can get a varied look very quickly.

"On 'D-Girls,' however, I decided to play the kitchen very down; I just lit through the set windows. Tony and Christopher are in the part of the kitchen that has a pocket toward the dining room and a large bay window. I had two Maxi-Brutes coming through the window. I didn't have the perimeter lights on at all, so light was just coming from the side."

Last year Abraham shot the entire series on Kodak Vision 500T 5279 and used a tobacco filter instead of an 85 for day exteriors. During the show's hiatus, he shot a pilot, during which he did some basic film-stock tests. He was surprised to discover that Vision 250D stock held the overexposure better than the 500T stock. "So this season," he says, "I decided to shoot the 250 for daylight exteriors and have them put in the tobacco filter in post."

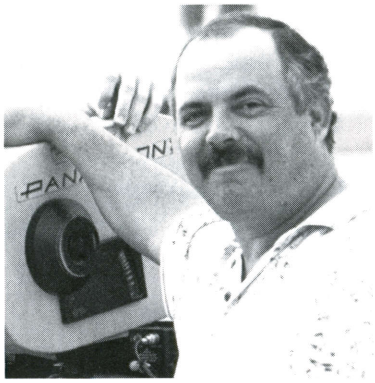
For full coverage of *The Sopranos*, see *AC* Oct. '99.

— Jean Oppenheimer

Phil Abraham photo by Anthony Neste

Hugo Cortina
JAG
"Boomerang, Part 2"

This year marked the third consecutive Emmy nomination that cinematographer Hugo Cortino has earned for his work on *JAG*. The series is entering its sixth season; at some point during the fourth season, Cortina was allowed to switch from



Kodak EXR 5298 and 5248 to the company's Vision stocks. He primarily uses Vision 320T 5277 to photograph the series. "I use extreme contrast in my lighting by overexposing and underexposing, and I believe the 320 is a less contrasty film," he submits. "It allows me to light more aggressively and have it subdued somewhat by the film."

The nominated episode was shot in Australia last winter (summertime in that country). Cortina praised both Kodak and Panavision for arranging to have duplicates of the show's regular film stocks and camera package waiting in Sydney when the production arrived. "We shot on a ferry in Sydney Harbour and in the down-

OUTSTANDING CINEMATOGRAPHY FOR A SINGLE-CAMERA SERIES

Phil Abraham
The Sopranos
"D-Girl"

Hugo Cortina
JAG
"Boomerang, Part 2"

***Thomas Del Ruth, ASC**
The West Wing
Pilot

Michael Gershman
Buffy, the Vampire Slayer
"Hush"

Constantine Makris, ASC
Law & Order
"Entitled, Part 2"

OUTSTANDING CINEMATOGRAPHY FOR A MULTI-CAMERA SERIES

Tony Askins, ASC
Will & Grace
"Acting Out"

Mike Berlin
Everybody Loves Raymond
"Robert's Rodeo"

Ron Browne
3rd Rock from the Sun
"Dick and Harry Fall in a Hole"

***Dick Quinlan (tie)**
Spin City
"Goodbye"

***Peter Smokler (tie)**
Sports Night
"The Cut Man"

OUTSTANDING CINEMATOGRAPHY FOR A MINISERIES OR MOVIE OF THE WEEK

Ralf Bode, ASC
Annie

***Robbie Greenberg, ASC**
Introducing Dorothy Dandridge

Fred Murphy, ASC
Witness Protection

Hiro Narita, ASC
Dirty Pictures

Ian Wilson, BSC
A Christmas Carol

***Denotes Winner**

town area in the middle of the night using only available light," he recalls. "I was shooting at T1.2 and T1.3 and force-developing some of it so I could get enough exposure. I couldn't use a Minolta light meter because it wouldn't go low enough; I had to pull out my Pentax Digital Spot meter to get anything, but it was fine. The film really came through for us."

For the Australian scenes, he used a ½ ProMist and a light straw filter to suggest the warmth of summer. For the Washington D.C. portions of the show, which were shot on stages in Los Angeles, he went with a Soft Effects #1. Because that filter creates a less hazy look, it helped bring out the cold, blue mid-winter sky.

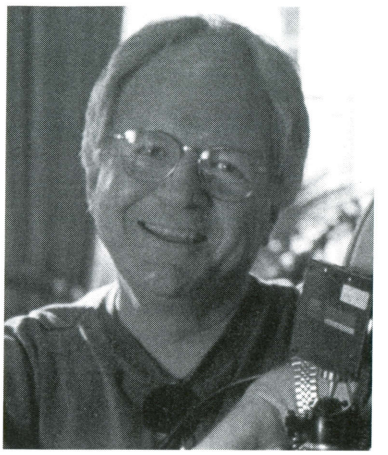
Cortina uses a tremendous array of lenses on every episode: Panavision Ultra Speed lenses ranging from 17mm to 200mm (including many oddball sizes), as well as the Primo 11:1 (24-275mm) T2.8 and the Primo 4:1 (17.5-75mm) T2.3 zooms. "Most of our sets are built like practical locations," he says. "We don't have greenbeds with lights on them. There are four walls and a ceiling piece. Even some of our permanent sets have walls that can't be moved, so I need an array of lenses to get me into different spots."

For additional *JAG* coverage, see *AC* March '00.

— J.O.

Thomas Del Ruth, ASC
The West Wing
Pilot

The popular NBC drama *The West Wing* picked up a record nine Emmys, including one for cinematographer Thomas Del Ruth, ASC, who also won an ASC Award this year for his work on the show. The series presents an optimistic White House, what Del Ruth calls "a Camelot for the masses." In keeping with that idea, he wanted to create soft, veiled images with a golden



quality, strong backlighting and strong contrast. Ultraspeed Primos help him achieve the romanticized quality the cinematographer seeks; he also uses black netting behind the lens on every shot.

Del Ruth pioneered the use of Steadicam in series televison when he shot the pilot for *ER*, and lengthy Steadicam shots are a hallmark of *The West Wing*. More than 600 lights are pre-rigged, each one slaved to individual dimmers that can be brought up or down at any time. Many of the units are built right into the set.

The pilot for *The West Wing* was shot in 16mm, a cost-saving measure on Warner Bros.' part, but Del Ruth was allowed to use Vision 500T 7279 stock. The series switched to 35mm when it was picked up.

For full coverage of *The West Wing*, see last month's issue of *AC*.

— J.O.

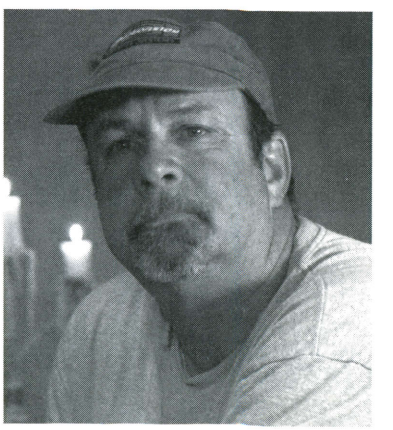
Michael Gershman
Buffy, the Vampire Slayer
"Hush"

Buffy, the Vampire Slayer has been a cult favorite since it hit the airwaves five years ago, and cinematographer Michael Gershman is still amazed at the freedom he is given to shoot the program the way he wants. "I pretty much do the show the same way I always have, except maybe a little faster," he jokes. He adds that he doesn't go onto the set with any preconceived notions about how he will light a scene: "Once I see the rehearsal, it just kind of happens."

He says "Hush," the episode for which he was nominated, presented a great opportunity for a cameraman because half of the show, which was directed by series creator Joss Whedon, was silent. "I could put my lights anywhere without worrying about the mic shadows or boom shadows. That's not the primary consideration when I light, of course, but it was nice to not have to worry about it.

"I was a bit more extreme in my lighting," Gershman recalls. "My contrast ratios were probably greater, but the biggest change, really, was in my head and how I approached every frame. My exposures weren't different and I used pretty much the same lighting units."

Backlighting has been a trademark of *Buffy* since the first episode. Characters are always stepping in and out of shadows, often with just a sliver of light illuminating them. "I love to top the light, bring it down and take it off of foreheads," the cameraman says. "Sometimes I'll cut it all the way past the eyes and just leave a little slash on the cheek or neck and keep the rest of the face not dark, but darker." He uses semi-transparent toppers — 216, 250 or Opal — depending upon the intensity of the light, and he frequently focuses his light sources through



Thomas Del Ruth, ASC photo courtesy of Warner Bros.

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objects in order to create patterns.

Buffy was shot on 16mm the first two seasons; when it switched to 35mm, Gershman was told that he had to use Kodak EXR 5298 and EXR 5293. Two years later he was given permission to use Vision 320T 5277 and Vision 500T 5279.

For full coverage of *Buffy*, see *AC* June '99.

— J.O.

Constantine Makris, ASC
Law & Order
"Entitled, Part 2"

This year brought Constantine Makris his fourth Emmy nomination for the venerable NBC crime drama *Law & Order*. He won the first three times, but he says he was still surprised and grateful to have been recognized by his peers with a fourth nomination.

"Entitled, Part 2" was the first half of a crossover show whose storyline was wrapped up on *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*. "What was notable for me was that Ed Sherin directed the episode," the cameraman says. "I won my first Emmy for a show he directed!"

Makris has been with *Law & Order* since the seventh episode of its first season, when he took over as director of photography from Ernest Dickerson, ASC, who left to work with Spike Lee. Makris feels that his own work has really evolved over the years. "When I first started out, I had a simple style, but over the years it got more complicated. In the last few years I've tried to return to a simpler style, although not the same one," he explains. "The show has always been a kind of crosslit, movie-look program, and the difference I'm talking about comes more from the methods I use to achieve that look, rather than a change to front lighting or side lighting.

"It's really a case of returning to a style that appeared to be more of a one-light source," he continues. "After I'd light, it would strike me as too bright — too much lighting, as opposed to looking naturalistic. Now my question is, 'How can I make it look like it is one light?'"

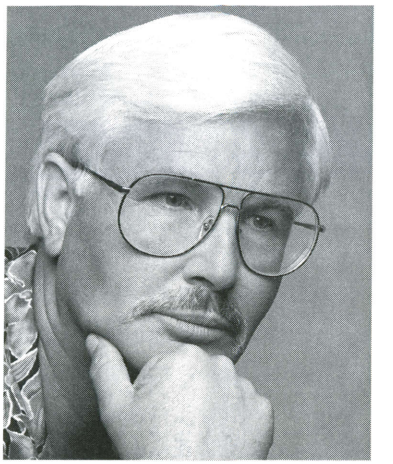
Makris, who has directed several episodes of the show over the years, will strictly be directing this season. He describes the show's shooting style as "very lean and not conventional. We make some pretty bold decisions not to cover scenes and to play dialogue off-camera." He estimates that 60 to 70 percent of the show is shot handheld. "The basic theory is that the audience is in the scene, not watching it," he concludes.

— J.O.

OUTSTANDING CINEMATOGRAPHY FOR A MULTI-CAMERA SERIES

Tony Askins, ASC
Will & Grace
"Acting Out"

Tony Askins, ASC's father was Monroe Askins, ASC, a top Hollywood cameraman well-known for shooting the television show *Gunsmoke*. The younger Askins's first job as a director of photography was on *The Love Boat*. He later photographed *The Colbys*, *Hotel*, and several other Aaron Spelling productions. Prior to *Will & Grace*, he also shot *Perfect Strangers* and *Family Matters*. This year's Emmy nomination is his first.



"Acting Out," which follows Will (Eric McCormack) and Jack (Sean Hayes) as they go to Rockefeller Center to complain when a kiss between two gay men scheduled to air on TV doesn't happen, was filmed in part on actual locations. Askins and a trimmed-down crew filmed two walk-and-talks, one at Rockefeller Plaza and the other on Riverside Drive. "I've spent quite a few years working on locations in foreign countries," Askins notes. "I've found that one of the most important things is just making sure everyone understands exactly what we're doing, especially if we're trying to pull off a fair amount of work in one day, as we were for this episode.

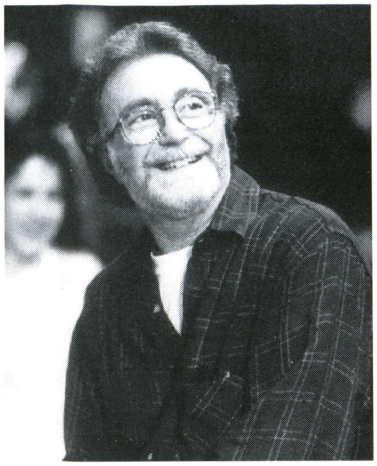
"You're also at the mercy of the weather," he adds. "You have to hope that it works on your behalf, and in this case it did. It was kind of overcast, which made a natural silk for us. We had to wait an hour for the light intensity to build up enough to photograph. But we had the day pretty well planned out, and that helped things come off very smoothly."

— David Heuring

Mike Berlin
Everybody Loves Raymond
"Robert's Rodeo"

Early in his career, Mike Berlin worked as an electrician on some episodes of *I Love Lucy*, the show that

Tony Askins, ASC photo by Douglas Kirkland



defined the sitcom genre and invented many of the multi-camera techniques still widely used today. In the early '70s, Berlin began shooting low-budget shows and regional commercials, while also serving as a gaffer for top cinematographers. In 1977, he photographed a sitcom called *Park Place*, followed by the pilot for *Night Court*.

Berlin has photographed every episode of *Everybody Loves Raymond* except the pilot. The show features comedian Ray Romano, Patricia Heating, Peter Boyle and Doris Roberts. In the nominated episode, a bull gores Ray's brother, Robert (Brad Garrett), a police officer, while he's on duty.

Everybody Loves Raymond is photographed with four dolly-mounted film cameras. The middle cameras are outfitted with 20-100mm 5:1 zoom lenses, and the outside cameras use 25-250mm 10:1 zooms. All of the cameras are loaded with Kodak Vision 320T 5277, and 18,000'-25,000' of the stock is used per episode.

"I try not to use any lights on stands unless they're way in the background," Berlin says. "I need to give the director the freedom to roll the dollies wherever he wants, and keep the stage clean. The actors are in and out of the sides of the set all the time. We hang almost everything from pipes. Across the front I bounce light, usually 2K Juniors, off of bead boards for a soft ambient fill.

"On this show, the producers aren't afraid of playing a scene pretty dark," Berlin notes. "They're not afraid of turning the lights out for a minute. They enjoy the different moods we can create. The important thing is the joke — [but] of course, the joke must be properly set up visually for it to work. That's the key."

— D.H.

Ron Browne
3rd Rock from the Sun
"Dick and Harry Fall in a Hole"

Ron Browne earned his first director of photography credit in 1966 on the TV series *Mission: Impossible*. Since then, he has worked on dozens of television productions, including *Coach, McCloud, Quincy, Vega$, Something So Right, That '70s*

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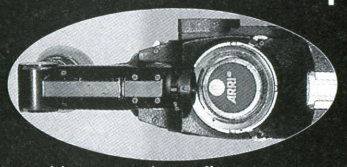

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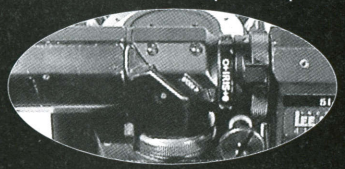

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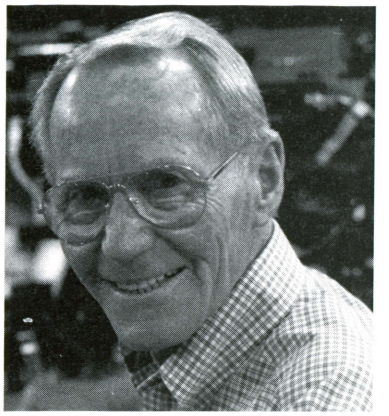


Show, Ask Harriet and *The Night Stalker*. His feature credits include *Trader Horn* and *Three Amigos*.

3rd Rock from the Sun, which is produced on film, features John Lithgow as Dick Solomon, the commander of a group of alien explorers visiting Earth to study its culture. In the nominated episode, Dick and Harry (French Stewart) tumble down an abandoned air shaft, prompting a televised search-and-rescue headed by an eccentric Scottish expert (played by guest star Alan Cumming).

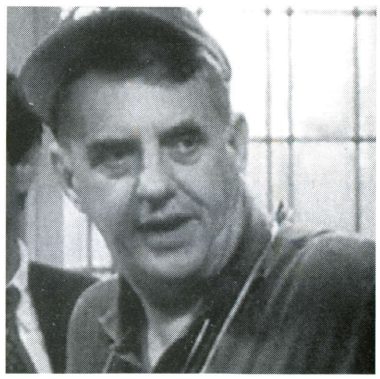
"It was a unique episode because most of it takes place in a hole in the ground," explains Browne. "It was quite difficult to photograph; at times, we shot through a tube. We primarily used moonlight and lamplight to create the right look in the hole."

— D.H.

Dick Quinlan
Spin City
"Goodbye"

Dick Quinlan has shot the popular series *Spin City* for four seasons. Prior to becoming a director of photography, he served as chief lighting technician for many top cinematographers, including Owen Roizman, ASC and Michael Chapman, ASC. *Spin City* star Michael J. Fox persuaded him to enter the multi-camera world, and Quinlan's background in single-camera work helped him bring an adventurous perspective to his work. "Mike aggressively backed me for this position, and he always let me be aggressive with the lighting," Quinlan says.

Quinlan usually shot the show with six cameras, including one on a Steadicam mount. The nominated episode allowed Quinlan to play the visuals with a little more drama and contrast than usual. "We wanted to give it a bit more of a feature quality," he says. "I used the [Eastman EXR] 5293 film stock, because with all of the postproduction work, things can get flattened out if you're not careful. It's difficult to hold a contrasty look for all five or six cameras. Often you're cutting from one camera to the other, which can be 180 degrees. The 93 helps me control the contrast that I like, and it maintains good, rich blacks. That's the look of the show."



"Goodbye" was the farewell to Mike Flaherty (Fox), who leaves City Hall as deputy mayor. It also marked Quinlan's farewell to the show, because production of *Spin City* has shifted from New York to California this season. Quinlan is currently working on two shows, *Welcome to New York* and *Madigan Men*.

— D.H.

Peter Smokler
Sports Night
"The Cut Man"

Peter Smokler's credits include the faux documentary *This Is Spinal*

Ron Browne photo by Frank Carroll

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Mr. Storaro will be presented with the Society's Lifetime Achievement Award at the 15th Annual ASC Awards ceremony, which will be held on February 18, 2001 at the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles.

The February 2001 issue of *American Cinematographer* will feature an extensive editorial review of Mr. Storaro's achievements.

Mr. Storaro has earned Oscars for his innovative cinematography on *Apocalypse Now*, 'Reds' and '*The Last Emperor.*' He received a fourth Academy Award nomination for *Dick Tracy.* He is one of the very few cinematographers to earn three Oscars. Storaro has also worked on such seminal films as *The Conformist, 1900, Last Tango in Paris, Luna, Tucker: The Man and His Dream, Ladyhawke* and *Bulworth.*

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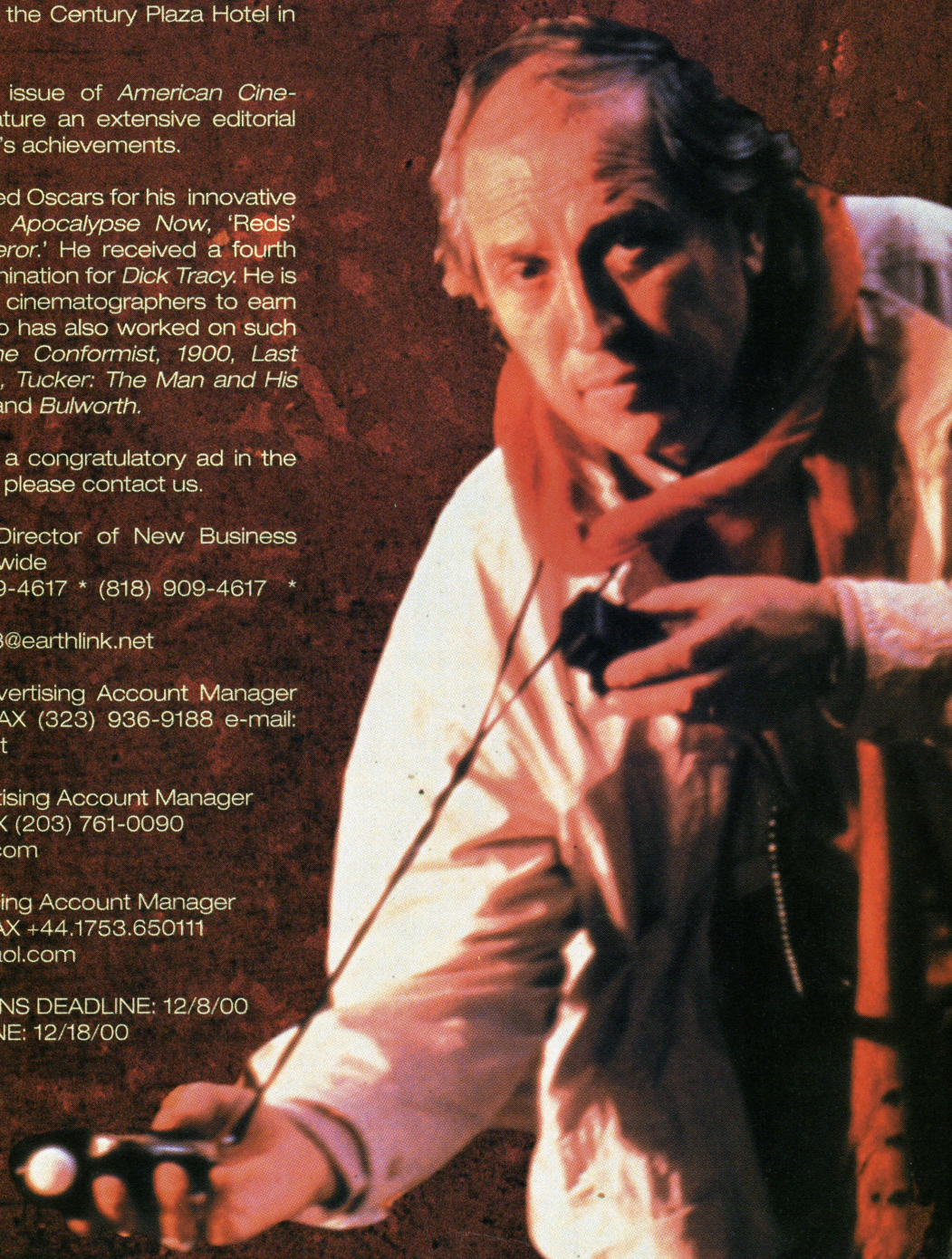

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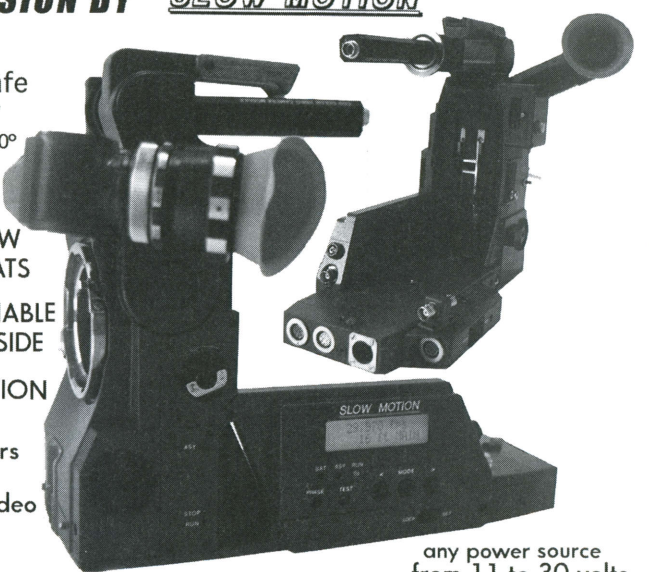

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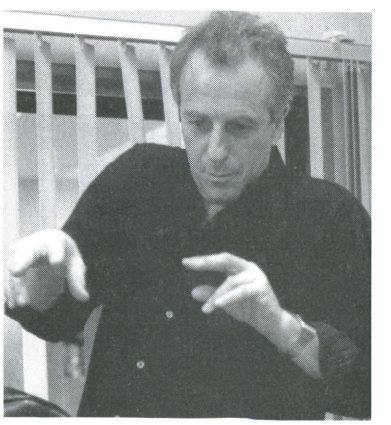
Televisionaries

Tap and *The North Shore*. He received a Cable Ace nomination for *The New Leave It to Beaver* and HBO's *Sessions*. He previously received Emmy nominations for episodes of *Pee-wee's Playhouse* and *The Larry Sanders Show*. He currently directs the photography for *The Drew Carey Show*.

Smokler mixed a variety of media for "The Cut Man," including an on-air and off-air look for the show within the show. A live video feed of a fictitious boxing event was filmed off of the various studio monitors. The set included a three-camera video setup in the news area of the set, and four or five film cameras at the same time. "Having all these different media going at once made for a very dynamic and interesting look," Smokler says.

The cinematographer says he differentiated the film and video material by giving the video segments a more generic lighting style. "When you see ESPN-type sports news shows, they usually have a very full, overlit kind of feel," he says. "If we give it that look, then it's believable. 'The Cut Man' of the episode's title is a commentator who is completely lame. We lit him as if we were shooting with an ENG camera that had a light on top of the camera. We did everything we could on the tape side to make it look generic, because then you would believe it was happening. Then, on the film side, we tried to light with



Ralf Bode, ASC photo by Douglas Kirkland

more of a realistic and expressive mood. There were several subplots that called for a darker and moodier look. We used a wide variety of photographic styles in this episode."

— D.H.

OUTSTANDING CINEMATOGRAPHY FOR A MINISERIES OR MOVIE OF THE WEEK

Ralf Bode, ASC
Annie

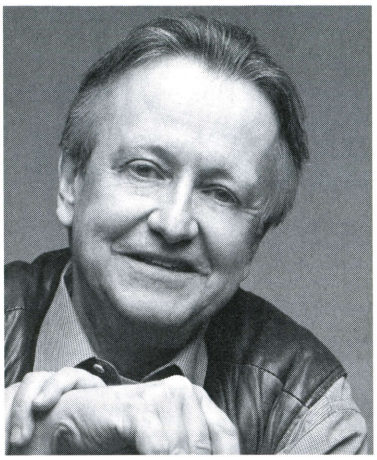


Photo by Douglas Kirkland

Annie marked Ralf Bode's third musical, following *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella* and *Gypsy*, and he affirms that his approach to planning and shooting musicals differs from how he prepares and photographs other films. For one thing, he attends all song-and-dance rehearsals and as many dialogue rehearsals as possible. Once the musical numbers are set, he videotapes them with angles and camera movements in mind. He also watches the sets go up; by the time filming begins, he has already determined the kind of lights and the corresponding color gels he will use.

Annie's color scheme predominantly comprised shades of lavender, pink, and pale blues and greens. "We were working with the 'Wonderful World of Disney,' so we were talking *color*," he remarks with a laugh. Plus, those colors supported the fairy-tale quality of the story.

The entire movie was shot on a set, with all interior lights on a computerized dimmer board. The biggest challenge Bode faced turned out to be an exterior set: Hennesy Street on the Warner Bros. backlot. The scene at hand was supposed to take place on New York's Lower East Side at Christmas, but it was actually shot in Los Angeles in July. "We had to silk in the entire street," recalls Bode. "We used overlapping sections of full gridcloth. Gridcloth is totally translucent and offers a very even light, which suggests an overcast day. Not only did that give us the wintry look we desired, but we didn't have to light the deep shadows a sunny sky would have given us. Matching sunlight would have required far more time."

Bode shot day exteriors on Kodak EXR 5248 stock, but to ensure a cold December feel he removed the 85 correction filter. He used ND3, 6 and 9 filters to keep the lens at around T5.6. He employed EXR 5293 for all interiors.

The cameraman says that one of the film's trickiest challenges was a shot in which Annie and Daddy Warbucks emerge from the theater and climb into a horse-drawn carriage. "We followed them down the road using a Technocrane on a track and the 11:1 (24-275mm) T2.8 Primo zoom," says Bode. "When you extend the Technocrane to its maximum and then put the 11:1 on, it becomes a little wobbly. But they were able to stabilize the images in post."

— J.O.

Robbie Greenberg, ASC
Introducing Dorothy Dandridge

Cinematographer Robbie Greenberg, ASC's work on the HBO biopic *Introducing Dorothy Dandridge* allowed him to collect his second Emmy in a row; he also won last year for HBO's *Winchell*. (Both shows

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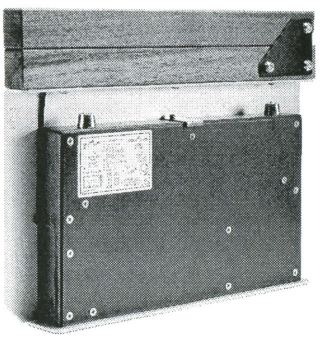

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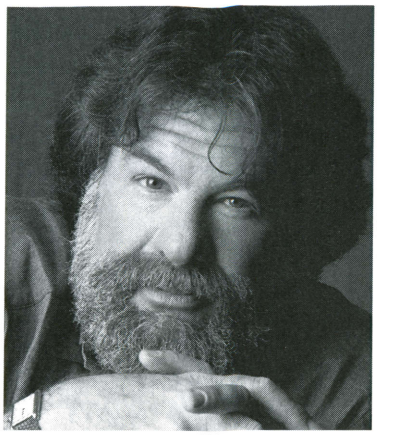


were also recognized with ASC Awards.) Greenberg says he wanted this film, which chronicles the tragic life of the talented and beautiful singer/actress Dorothy Dandridge (Halle Berry), to reflect a romanticized view of Hollywood because that was how Dandridge viewed the city.

A self-described "Panavision guy," Greenberg chose a Platinum as his A-camera, and he used a Millennium for a shot of Dandridge arriving at the Academy Awards, getting out of her limousine and walking past screaming fans. "The Millennium has some added features built in: you can change the speed during a shot by programming it in, and when you hit the button, it begins its program and changes speed and aperture. [In the Academy Awards sequence,] Dorothy gets out of the limo and is stopped by a reporter. As she starts to walk away from the interviewer, the speed changes slightly to emphasize the unreality of the situation. Her POV of the crowd, with flashbulbs going off, is even a bit slower. It was all done to heighten the reality."

For full coverage of *Introducing Dorothy Dandridge*, see *AC* August '99.

— J.O.

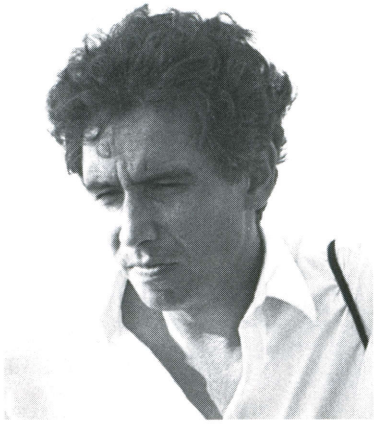
Fred Murphy, ASC
Witness Protection

Fred Murphy, ASC calls *Witness Protection* "an exercise in

Photo by Douglas Kirkland

minimalism." Nearly the entire film takes place on one set, which is little more than an enlarged hotel room. This is the underground apartment where the mob-affiliated protagonist and his family are taken when they enter the FBI's Witness-Protection Program. Because they are two floors below ground, the apartment windows look out onto walls. Above the outdoor patio is an open sky (albeit two stories up), so if the characters step onto the patio they can see some natural light.

"The characters are basically living in a bunker, so the big challenge became making [the various scenes] interesting," says Murphy. "For me, that means what happens to the light. The only windows in the room [a combination dining room/living room/kitchen] are little slits, which the audience occasionally sees above the fake windows. It's the only natural light that comes into the



Robbie Greenberg, ASC photo by Douglas Kirkland

room, so everything is lit by overhead lights, the kinds of aluminum grids you see in motels and offices."

The interrogation room has the same setup: narrow windows, perhaps 6" high (which in this case run the length of the room), and overhead lights in aluminum grids containing a series of either Blondes or 5Ks. The light itself is predominantly white, in contrast to the film's opening sequences, which take place in dark, rainy Boston before the family goes into hiding. Murphy used full CTBs to achieve Boston's dark, bluish look.

The film has a lot of tension, which Murphy feels is generated partially by a moving camera and partially by the visual contrast. "The camera moves in an almost eccentric way [on a dolly], often leaving people behind when they are speaking and moving on to another character," he explains. "Plus, there's the gloominess and glumness of where they are. It's dark inside the apartment and very bright out where the patio is. That contrast adds to the tension."

— J.O.

Hiro Narita, ASC
Dirty Pictures

The Showtime movie *Dirty Pictures* follows the real-life trial of

Televisionaries

Cincinnati museum director Dennis Berrie, who was charged with child pornography and pandering obscenity for his staging of an exhibition of Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs. Director of photography Hiro Narita, ASC says he wanted Berrie's own world to reflect the same strong sense of design and some of the starkness that distinguishes Mapplethorpe's work.

"I set off Berrie's home office, a world in which none of his family participates, by using a 100-watt household bulb in a paper lamp, plus a Pepper bounced off a card," he says. "Although the room was filled with tans and beiges, it gave the room a stark, monochromatic look." The rest of the house, where the whole family lives and plays, is more colorful and relaxed.

Scenes of the jurors deliberating in the jury room are particularly eye-catching. The set consisted of a

single, long table sitting on a black-painted floor, with black drapes surrounding it on three sides. A 4' x 10' x 2' soft box with six 1Ks on dimmers hung above the table. "That was director Frank Pierson's idea," Narita says. "Instead of building a conventional jury room, he wanted to create a sense of the jurors in limbo. I thought it was extraordinary." Whenever someone gets up from the table and steps away for a moment, he completely melts into the black background as though he's simply disappeared. A moment later, the person suddenly re-emerges from the darkness and sits back down at the table.

The small size of the sets presented some problems, according to Narita. There wasn't enough room to place any set dressing outside the courtroom windows (a set built inside a warehouse), nor was there money in the budget for backdrops. Instead, Narita frosted the courtroom windows and beamed 5Ks and 10Ks through them. Within the courtroom, he used color-balanced fluorescents.

The foyer outside the courtroom was a real location, an actual courthouse that already had mercury-vapor lights. "We had to use them because they were such a strong source of light, and to color-correct them was prohibitive," Narita

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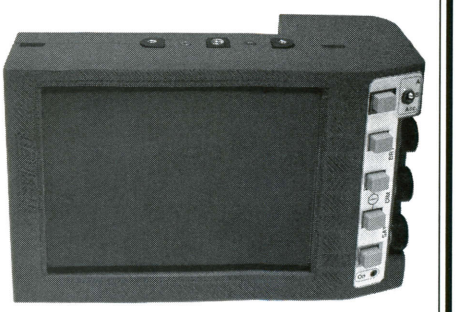

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says. "Any supplemental lamps I used were HMIs, and they were color-corrected to match the vapor units. Because mercury-vapor is very green to film stock, when you use additional lights they have to be green. I therefore added Plus Green gels to our lights."

— J.O.

Ian Wilson, BSC
A Christmas Carol

The Hallmark Entertainment production of *A Christmas Carol* opens with a shot of the London skyline that cranes down, passes through the roof of a house and ends up on a busy London street. However, the entire film was shot inside Ealing Studios. "We relied on digital effects," says British director of photography Ian Wilson, BSC. "We filmed the long shot of the city somewhere else and added an invisible wipe when the camera passed through the house. You don't see the top of the street in any shot, or else we would have had to matte in the sky."

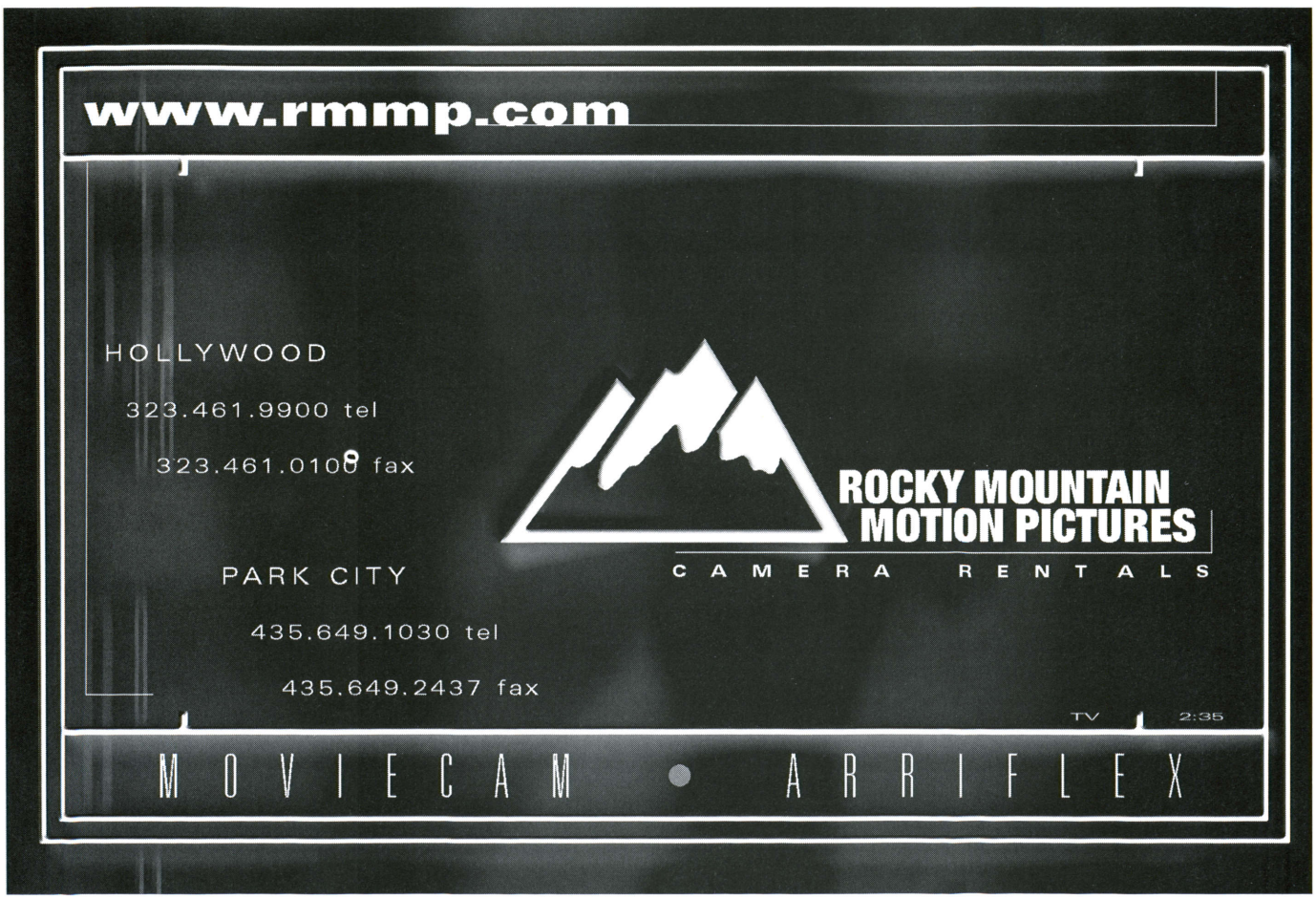
Starring Patrick Stewart as Scrooge, *A Christmas Carol* marked the first time Wilson had worked with director David Jones, who tapped him after seeing his photography in Derek Jarman's *Edward II*. Wilson studied photography and graphic design at art school before moving over to film school. "In the 1960s in London, it was easy to get a job if you were young," he recalls. Rather than beginning as an assistant, he started immediately as a cameraman on features.

The first third of the famous Dickens holiday tale has a cold, dark mood and feel that mirrors Scrooge's miserable personality. After the character's spiritual conversion, however, everything becomes bright and joyous. Wilson used 250 daylight stock without any gels during the first part of the film, and added CTS filters to warm things up after Scrooge's rebirth.

"The visual effects were quite interesting," he notes. "Some of the effects, like the arrival of the first ghost, we did in-camera. But we did motion-control for the others. The main ghost was transparent."

One of the toughest obstacles Wilson faced was simply the low-key look he wanted. "Television engineers don't like low-key [images]," he remarks. "They are afraid the shadows will disappear, so I tend to do TV differently than I would a feature; I fill in the shadows more than I would with a film." After a moment's hesitation, he adds, "It's actually more of a problem in the United States. For whatever reason, British TV sets are better."

— J.O. ■



Pop Culture

Director Rupert Wainwright and cinematographer Carolyn Chen showcase stylish suspense in Sprite campaign.

by Stephanie Argy

Director Rupert Wainwright and cinematographer Carolyn Chen recently collaborated on Sprite's $20 million "What are you thinkin'?" campaign, an unusually narrative-driven series of ads whose story unfolds over the course of five spots. The ads feature rap stars Mos Def, Beanie Sigel, Pharoahe Monch and Lord Finesse, who arrive one by one at a glitzy jewelry store; the customers, clerks and security guards all suspect that the men are armed and have come to commit a robbery, which leads to a climactic confrontation with the police.

Although Chen and Wainwright had collaborated on many commercials before, the cinematographer says the Sprite campaign was her first experience with such a narrative-oriented series of ads. "There was a lot of storytelling involved," she notes. "Rupert is different than a lot of commercial directors, because [his background is in] features." Wainwright, whose feature credits include *Stigmata* and *Sadness of Sex*, says that although other commercial campaigns have featured a storyline that unfolds over several spots, the Sprite campaign's explosive finale gives it a markedly different tone, one more akin to Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing* than the *thirtysomething* feel that he's created for other such campaigns. In addition, Wainwright found the Sprite commercials unique in that they advance a philosophical or social idea about how people interact.

The agency initially gave Wainwright five different stories that had been outlined in short-story form. "As short stories, they were a little vague," he remembers. "I decided to break them down and write them in screenplay format." He combined the five spots into a single script that was 10-12 pages long so that the plot's trajectory would become clear. "Once I'd done that," he details, "I worked with the agency very closely to develop different characters."

One important aim for the agency and the client was to spread the blame for the misunderstanding across characters of various ethnicities. "You'll notice that a lot of the cops in the spot are black," Wainwright notes. "[The theme] was more an issue of prejudice, rather than *racial* prejudice. It just as easily could have been a bunch of white people reacting to a bunch of punk rockers."

The director asked Chen to photograph the campaign because "she's pretty much my first choice for most commercials. I rely on her quite a lot to suggest things that will make a spot more interesting visually." In this case, he recalls, Chen recommended that he watch the Hype Williams film *Belly*. "We wanted a stylized look," explains Chen. "Rupert [wanted viewers to] feel as if they were watching a part of a movie, so the camera angles and camera movement were all very dynamic — not just arbitrarily dynamic, but part of a narrative form."

She adds that certain techniques used in the Sprite campaign are part of the well-established language of the action thriller. "In the pragmatic form, it's using wide lenses, dollying into people as they turn and craning through car-chase sequences," she expounds. "We wanted to keep the camera moving in a very kinetic way. All of the spots

Photos courtesy of Smoke & Mirrors

were about this implied sense of suspense, [the suggestion] that these people were trying to rob this store. It's all a series of looks and misdirections. Using the language of action films to enhance that sense of suspense ultimately led to the payoff."

Filming the campaign, which involved three weeks of prep and a six-day shoot, proved to be a bit of a logistical nightmare. "In a perfect world, we would have shot one spot at a time," Wainwright reflects. But that was impossible, largely because of the rappers' schedules. As a result, the shooting schedule was jumbled. While this might not pose a problem on shorter and less complex commercials, Wainwright says he found it a real challenge to make sure eyelines would match up and that the tension would be at the right level in the different spots. "Sometimes you just panic a bit, but eventually you calm down," he notes. "This campaign wasn't terribly easy. It wasn't interesting complexity, it was annoying complexity — pain-in-the-ass complexity!"

Chen faced similar difficulties. "We had to keep track of continuity much more than on an average commercial — lighting continuity, camera continuity and style continuity," she recalls. "There was a lot to remember, and [my ability to do it] came from having shot movies."

Says Wainwright, "It was very difficult to get an idea of what we were doing at any one moment. I had to have it all completely worked out in my head." To help do that, he storyboarded the entire series of commercials, a process that took about three days.

The shoot occurred mainly at the Greystone Mansion in Beverly Hills, and once it began, the rap stars faced similar continuity challenges. "The different people [who were supposed to be] looking at each other weren't always there [at the same time]," Wainwright says. "I think if they'd been professional actors, they might have gone up the walls." He says he was very impressed by the performances of the rappers, whom he found much more camera-aware than performers from many other pop genres. "I've worked with a lot of rappers, and in my experience, a lot of them are very movie-savvy; they really want to be good actors." Rap, he points out, is all about persona: "People are playing characters, so the acting is built into it."

Most of the other performers in the commercials were actors hired for the duration of the shoot. One notable exception was a character in the third spot, a Persian-looking doorman outside the store. (Exteriors were shot at the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles.) "We meant to cast someone for that role but forgot to," Wainwright admits. Because the character was supposed to be non-Caucasian, the production had to scramble to find someone who not only wasn't white, but also had a doorman's uniform. "This guy turned up to go on duty!" he laughs. "He was just on staff, working his day job. He was brilliant."

Chen's most recent feature was *The Crow: Salvation*, and the third installment of the movie series gave her experience that proved useful for the Sprite commercials. "We did a lot of car chases and explosions and stunts on *The Crow*," she notes. "Knowing how to cover a stunt or a little piece of action was definitely valuable [for shooting the campaign]." Very dynamic, wide, low camera angles have been established as part of the style of hip-hop videos, and Chen used that convention on the Sprite commercials, employing wide lenses to keep things dynamic and to convey a feeling of action and suspense. Wainwright notes, "I wanted to try and be as wide as possible, which made it more difficult for Carolyn." Over and over, he remembers, Chen would ask, "Do you think I can fit a light over there?" and he would answer, "I think I'm going to see it."

Wainwright works closely with Chen on the lighting schemes for their collaborations. "On a movie project, you can't spend the whole time telling people where to put the backlight," he says. "On a commercial, it's pretty much part of your job to control the look with the cinematographer; I think camera people expect that from experienced directors of commercials." Although he never tells Chen where to put lights, he does explain very specifically the balance he wants between a face and its background, or where he wants the light to wrap around a face.

Opposite page: Rapper Mos Def arrives at an upscale jewelry store in "The Watch," one of five spots in a Sprite campaign directed by Rupert Wainwright and photographed by Carolyn Chen. This page: Lord Finesse and his mother stroll down the store's stairs in "The Pick-Up." Chen says she wanted to use the language of action films, including a reliance on wide angles, to enhance the commercials' suspense.

The Sprite spots feature four hip-hop stars arriving at the jewelry store one by one, which arouses the suspicions of patrons and employees and leads to a climactic police raid.

"Some directors of photography get very territorial about that, but Carolyn is really good at being involved," he says. "She takes a lot of creative input, and then adds her own. I trust her taste."

Chen used a Panavision Platinum for the Sprite commercials and chose Kodak Vision 500T 5279 film stock. "It's a very versatile film stock and has a lot of contrast," she notes, adding that she believes the choice of film stock is less important that many people believe. Instead, she feels that the quality of a project's look comes more from the lighting and the palette chosen during telecine. For the same reason, she avoids using filtration in the camera. "I always feel like filtration augments the quality of the lighting and the texture of the film," she explains, "but I try to do that in the lighting itself." To get a softer look, for example, she uses a softer quality of light rather than diffusion on the lens. "And if it's a color, I'll [create] it at the light, in the palette of the art direction, or in the telecine later on."

Rap videos tend to have a certain style of lighting that Chen adopted on the Sprite spots. "If you look at a lot of contemporary hip-hop and R&B videos, there's a very specular quality to the light," she says. "We don't use a lot of backlight or traditional studio lighting. It's based on a subtle realism, but it's stylized and luminous." To get that look, Chen uses non-traditional lights as much as possible. "I feel like the traditional Hollywood light, the Fresnel, was designed 100 years ago to project as hard a shadow as possible," the cinematographer says. "The Fresnel was invented when film ASA was about 6!" No matter what kind of filtration or diffusion goes in front of the light, she observes, "you're always trying to soften a light that's inherently a hard light."

Instead, Chen prefers to use Aurasofts or Soft Suns, or Par cans bounced into Roscoflex. "I use a lot of bounce light but keep it punchy and contrasty," she says. "I don't use a lot of super-soft diffusion. I try to direct it in a way so that the shadow quality is soft and the quality of the light remains specular; I try to use as much bounce and indirect light that

Cinematography Screencraft
by Peter Ettedgui

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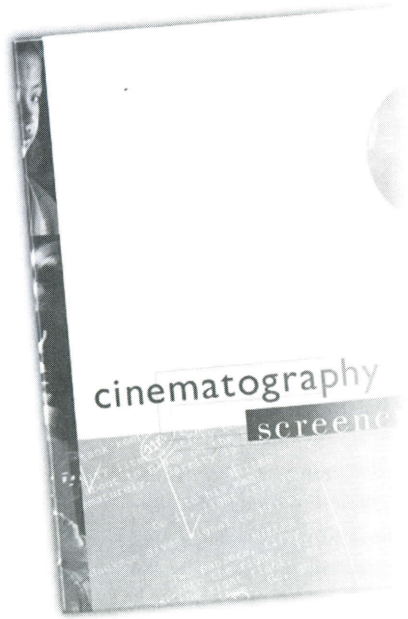

would naturally occur in a late afternoon or interior situation."

On the Sprite spots, Chen also used a 50K Soft Sun by Lightning Strikes. "It's a great light to simulate sunlight, because is has a broadness to it — it's a six-foot-wide light," she details. "It's dimmable at the lamp, which is a unique trait for daylight-balanced lights. You can't really dim most HMIs." She also warmed the lights with gels in trying to "keep [the images] all in the warm, rich browns and sepia and straw tones. There's a classic sort of woodwork art direction [in the campaign]. We shot in a mansion that had a lot of dark wood, and people's skin tones were dark and chocolatey."

Though the spots feature people of various races, Chen says lighting and shooting many different skin tones didn't pose any problems. "Years ago, people would note the difficulty of putting a white guy next to a black guy, [but] there's latitude in [today's] film stocks," she explains. "You [accomplish your goal] with flags, with lights or lack of light."

For Chen, telecine is as important as lighting. "I work hard on getting the right look in the dailies," she says. This is partly to ensure that the final product will have the look she intended, especially because she is seldom on hand to oversee the postproduction. "By the time you're done with the spot and they're through cutting it, weeks or months have elapsed, and you're on the next job," she concedes.

Wainwright believes that commercials pose their own distinct challenges. "A lot of feature directors say, 'It must be great fun whacking out all of those commercials,' and I reply, 'It's actually a lot of work.' They kind of look down on it, [as though] it's an easy thing. It's a gigantically different time scale, and the [audience's] attention span is focused in a dramatically different way." Although many of techniques he has learned on features came in handy on the Sprite job, he says that's not always the case, noting, "You have to think, 'I learned this in features, [but] I wonder if it's going to work in commercials.'"

Chen and Wainwright assess their set.

Chen takes just as much inspiration from her early work in music videos as she does from her feature photography. "Over the past five or 10 years, the popularity of music videos has definitely impacted the look of commercials," she observes. "Commercials are no longer for just a broad-based network audience." The rise of cable and niche programming means that commercials can be designed for a narrower audience. For the commercial cinematographer, that means more variety: "You can jump quickly from one style to another — you're referencing either music-video styles or what appeals visually to certain audiences much more specifically than you would on a film. That's the beauty of doing commercials." ■

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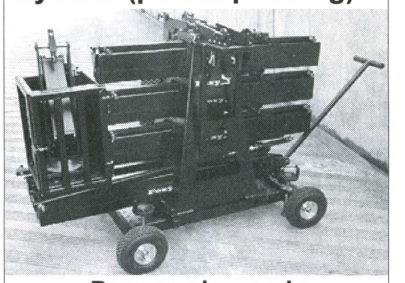

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Low-Tech Brilliance

Britain's Hammer & Tongs strikes a chord by employing simple but clever strategies in music videos for the rock groups Blur and Supergrass.

by Neil Matsumoto

A number of innovative music videos made with fairly small budgets have appeared on the scene recently, among them Chris Cunningham's video for Björk's "All Is Full of Love" (which won MTV's Video Music Award for Breakthrough Video; see *AC* Feb. '00) and French filmmaker Michel Gondry's video for the Chemical Brothers' "Let Forever Be," which depicts the surreal journey of a woman trying to get to work. Other videos that have received significant attention lately are those of director Garth Jennings, from the production team of Hammer & Tongs.

Based in London, Hammer & Tongs (which takes its name from the blacksmith's tools) is a creative team consisting of Jennings, Nick Goldsmith and Dom Leung. All three met while they were film students at St. Martins College in London. Although they sometimes exchange duties, Jennings undertakes most of the directing, while Goldsmith handles the producing and Leung the editing. In the past year they have created music videos for Pulp, Fatboy Slim, The Eels and Lamb. Their two newest videos, Blur's "Coffee and TV" and Supergrass's "Pumping On Your Stereo," were both nominated for Breakthrough Video at this year's Video Music Awards. ("Coffee and TV" beat out Cunningham and Gondry's videos to win video of the year at the European MTV Awards.) What makes this unique is that Hammer & Tongs's work has struck a chord in the flashy music-video world by displaying an innocent charm, an almost sweet quality — a stark contrast from the tongue-in-cheek irony found in most cutting-edge music videos.

Blur's "Coffee and TV" tells the story of a milk carton who goes to the big city in search of the missing boy whose photo is printed on its side. In the city, he gets kicked and squashed, innocently visits a prostitute for answers, and even falls in love with a strawberry milk carton that is literally crushed before his eyes. In the end, happiness prevails. He finds the missing person, who turns out to be Blur's guitarist, and brings him home to his family.

Jennings said the band originally wanted a performance video, but he didn't feel that such an approach worked for the song. "For some unknown reason, I had an idea about a milk carton going to look for whomever was printed on its package," explains Jennings. "I thought it would make sense for him to be with the family who is missing the person. We just tied it together." On the

Photos courtesy of Hammer & Tongs

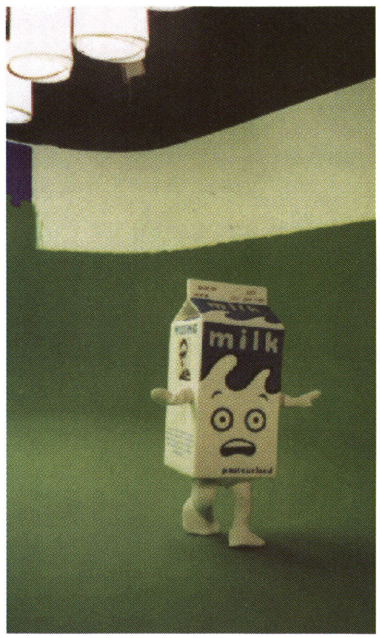
shoot, Jennings worked with his longtime collaborator, cinematographer Igor Jadue-Lillo, whose feature credits include *The Low Down* (which screened at this year's Toronto International Film Festival) and *Disco Pigs*. "It's one of those relationships where I don't have to ever show him any references, such as cutting out a magazine picture," says Jennings. "We just talk about the story, and he talks about his ideas."

Among Jadue-Lillo's ideas for "Coffee and TV" was that it should be photographed in the anamorphic aspect ratio. He used a Panaflex Gold camera equipped with Primo lenses, and chose Kodak Vision 200T 5274 film stock. "In terms of consistency, Kodak Vision is great [when working in] studio interiors and on location in a country like England, where you never know what the levels of light will be," the cinematographer remarks. "In Los Angeles you pretty much always know it's going to be sunny; [in England] it can rain or become dark or sunny at a moment's notice. I'd rather work with Vision 200 instead of changing stocks — it's given me a great response."

The production utilized a Technocrane and a Fisher 10 dolly. Jadue-Lillo also used an Arri gear head, which made the camera's frequent, quick tilts and pans very smooth. The cinematographer says he is impressed by the Technocrane's ability to "take the motion out of the human hand" and make movements flow. Many of the tracking shots in the video were shot from car to car, and some of the chase scenes were shot handheld in the middle of Covent Garden. The only footage shot in a studio was that of the milk carton wandering in an alleyway, where he discovers Blur playing in a basement. The cinematographer mainly used Fresnels to light the video, and his package also included Kino Flos, Peppers and one Wall-o-Lite.

What is perhaps most unique about "Coffee and TV" is the empathy the viewer feels for the milk carton. "We did our best to take it as seriously as possible, and we structured [the video] so that you'd actually feel something for the little fella," says Jennings. "It wouldn't be enough for you to watch something that just walked around." The carton was created not with CGI, but rather by using an actor in a suit. "We enjoy working with puppeteers and real people as opposed to effects," says the director. "Something more human and interesting comes out when you start playing with people and suits."

Jennings and Jadue-Lillo shot all of the plates and then brought in an actor who had played one of the



Ewoks in *Return of the Jedi*. A costume of a milk carton was made, and the actor ran around in front of a giant greenscreen for most of the day. Referencing his storyboards, Jennings discovered that the actor could not run fast enough to make it across the shot in time. The filmmakers decided to speed him up in postproduction, which actually helped cheat the effect because it almost appears as though the milk carton is animated. "The poor man was exhausted by the end of it, but it was good fun," says Jennings.

According to Jadue-Lillo, matching the plates with the milk carton and greenscreen was the most difficult aspect of the shoot. Among the lights in his package for the greenscreen shoot were six 5K cyc lights. "We had a huge greenscreen set, and it was a lot of work just to match the actor, so we had to constantly go back to check the videotape in terms of dissolving one shot to another," he recalls. "The post house, VTR, did a fantastic job."

The team's video for Supergrass's "Pumping on Your Stereo" is vastly different but still shares the low-tech and handmade feel of Blur's video. The video depicts Supergrass playing a live gig in a darkened studio. Although their faces are normal, their body parts include cartoonlike, elongated limbs that are literally 10 times bigger than normal, and their instruments are singing along. As the video progresses, mayhem ensues, blending elements of Japanese Noh theater with Jim Henson's *The Muppet Show*.

Jennings says the idea for the clip came to him in an organic fashion. "I was listening to the music and bouncing up and down with it, thinking, 'What on earth can I do for this other than bounce up and down with it?'" he recalls, laughing. "I remembered something I'd seen on a *Muppets* show; they had a black screen [behind the puppets], and all of the puppeteers were wearing black. We thought it would be fun to have the band stand there in black with their heads sticking through the [screen above the puppets] while [the puppets] were being operated by puppeteers." For example, Supergrass's lead singer stood on a black table and leaned forward, with a giant puppet hanging off him like a bib around his neck.

Jennings developed the puppets for the video at Henson's studio. "I left all of the puppeteers in,

Opposite and this page: The music video for Blur's "Coffee and TV" follows a milk carton who travels to a big city in search of the boy pictured on its side. The clip was nominated in the category of Best Breakthrough Video at this year's MTV Awards.

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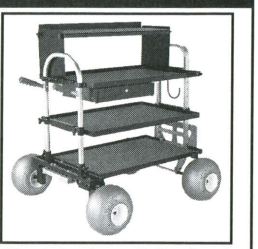

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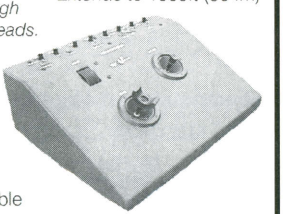


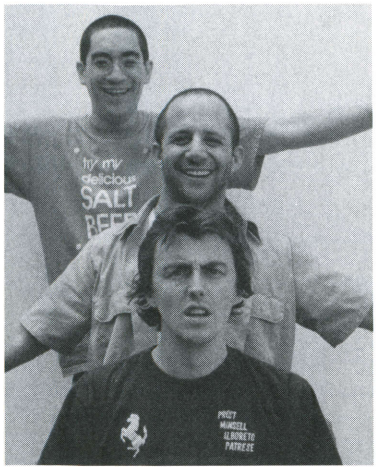
Low-Tech Brilliance

For Supergrass's song "Pumping on Your Stereo," another MTV Best Breakthrough Video nominee, director Garth Jennings and cinematographer Igor Jadue-Lillo photographed the band playing their instruments with some Muppet-style limbs.

and if you look carefully you can see the puppets' rods," says Jennings. "When the fireworks go off at the end, you can see all 22 puppeteers sitting there. One is my mom and one is Nick's mom — we needed all the help we could get!"

Jadue-Lillo and Jennings first thought of lighting the video like a Seventies disco, but they soon realized that any form of backlight would fully reveal the puppeteers. Instead, the cinematographer used flat light from the front and shot the action straight on; he utilized an assortment of Fresnels (10Ks, 5Ks, 2Ks and 1Ks), eight Par Can 64 Floods, six Mini-Brutes and several 2.5K Silhouettes rented from AFM Lighting, placing all of the units on dimmers. The filmmakers simply crushed the blacks during the telecine process; by turning up the contrast, they caused the puppeteers to virtually disappear.

Jadue-Lillo shot the video in the 1.33:1 aspect ratio using an Arriflex 535B camera package. He used Zeiss lenses and, as with the Blur video, he chose Kodak Vision 200T stock. Because the video was shot straight-on, the cinematographer says he could concentrate more on what went into the frame rather than camera movement. "One of the amazing things about this video was Garth's simplicity," notes Jadue-Lillo. "He just came to me and said, 'I want to come out of the telecine and edit and conform it without any postpro-

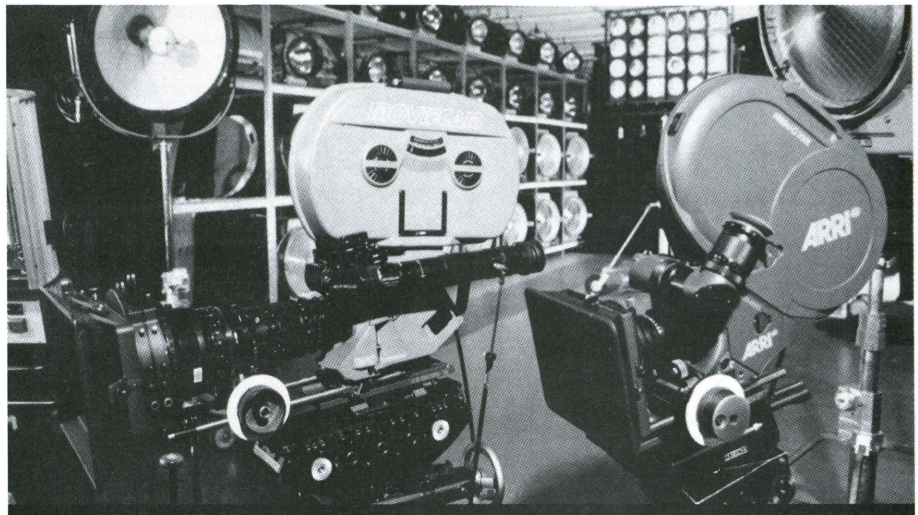


The creative minds behind Hammer & Tongs are (from front to back) Garth Jennings, Nick Goldsmith and Dominic Leung.

duction effects.' He always directs the actors while paying close attention to the film frame, so I knew it would work in the end."

Because the MTV generation is used to seeing big spectacles and elaborate effects, the clever, low-tech videos created by Hammer & Tongs come across as a breath of fresh air. Jennings admits that some of the budget restrictions they've been given have forced them to make decisions they might not have otherwise made. But in the end, he says, it has always turned out for the best. "We did a video for Fatboy Slim which [depicts] the evolution of man, but there was no way we could have afforded to do that like Disney's *Dinosaur*," he notes. "Instead, we did it in a much more handmade way. I like things that are a bit more theatrical, and I don't mind seeing wires and bits of string!"

Jennings recently finished a video shoot in Manhattan for Badly Drawn Boy that he is very excited about. "Since we're big music fans, I think our mission has always been to concentrate on music we really love," he concludes. "I've never sat down and said, 'Let's make some art,' but I think we've certainly tried to make something entertaining." ■



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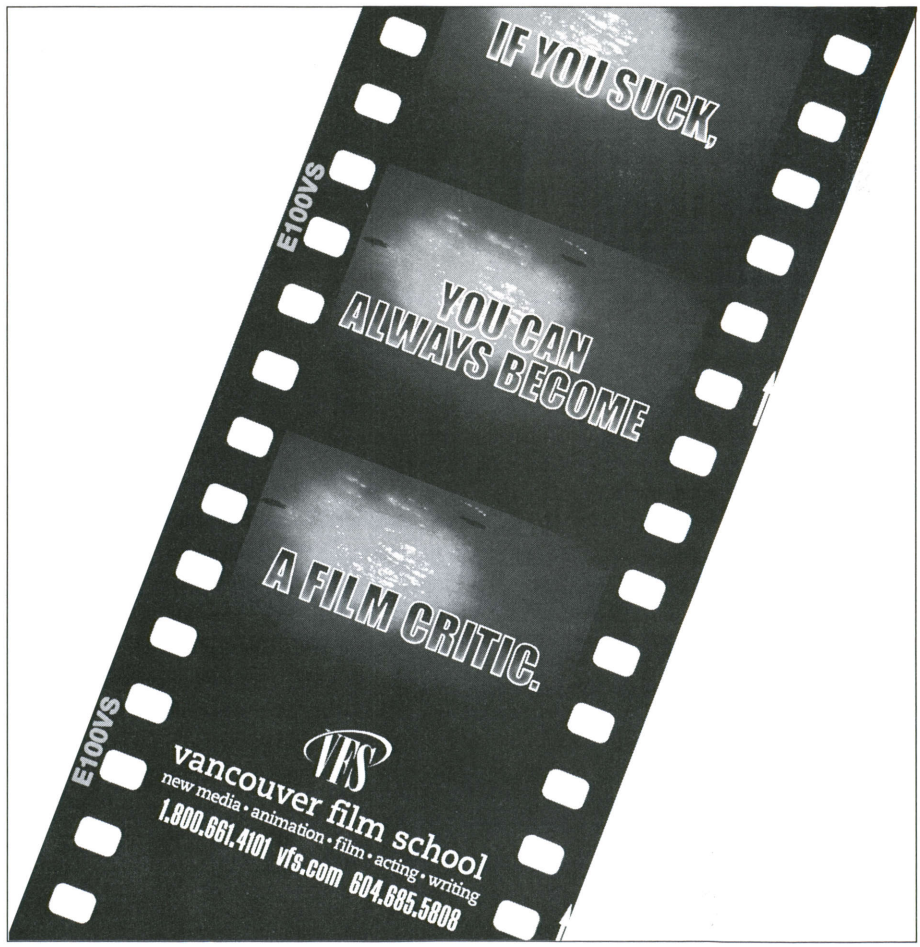
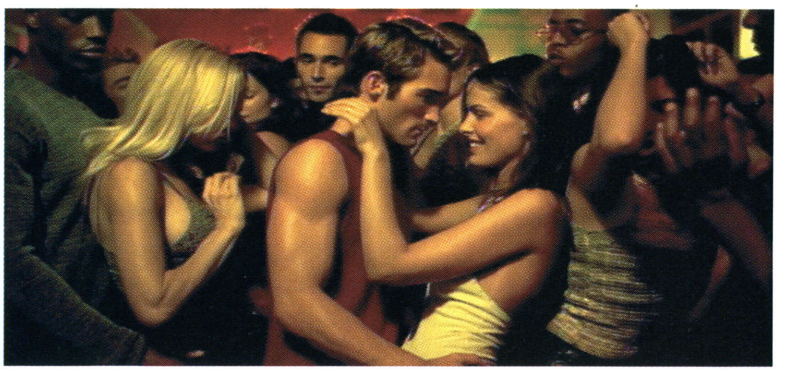


Members Only

Director Francis Lawrence and cinematographer Jeff Cutter create an aura of exclusivity for a Bacardi spot.

by Stephanie Argy



Striving to create a more urban, sophisticated image for the Caribbean rum-distilling company Bacardi, director Francis Lawrence worked with cinematographer Jeff Cutter on a commercial in which three young men party at a secret underground nightclub. "We tried to create a 30-second visual adventure for these guys entering a Bacardi world," says Lawrence. The inspiration for the spot came from a trip Bacardi executives took to Cancun, Mexico, during last year's spring break.

The initial concept boards for the ad showed three men going into a nightclub crowded with sexy women, dancers and a guy twirling glow sticks (a common club-scene accessory). Lawrence elaborated on the premise, making the club a secret, exclusive place that could only be entered with the swipe of a special card. Cutter points out that Lawrence always makes spots more intricate and involved than those originally envisioned by the agency. "They're more difficult to shoot, but they're much more interesting," he says.

To help communicate his vision to the cinematographer, Lawrence uses storyboards and other visual references. "Francis always shows me [pages] from fashion magazines and things like that," Cutter says. "Normally he does tons of magazine tears. He also really likes flares, and he had some references for that [for this ad]."

For the Bacardi spot, Lawrence wanted a red-and-gold color scheme, the same hues used by Bacardi for its iconic bat logo, but with an additional green element provided by lasers. Lawrence says this color scheme was one of the reasons he asked Cutter to do the job. The two have frequently collaborated since their college days, and they had successfully used a similar color palette on a music video for Lauryn Hill. Noting that Cutter "is really good with big spaces," Lawrence also knew the cinematographer would work well in the spot's large location, a five-story Canadian water plant.

The plant interior featured gangways for balconies running around the sides. The sizable facility measured approximately 50'-60' wide, 100'-120' long and 40'-50' tall. On the floor of the plant were turbines, hidden in the commercial by dancing extras.

Lawrence wanted the lighting to inject the commercial with visual energy. "He wanted it to be really frenetic, with tons of moving light," the cinematographer recalls. This visual frenzy was accomplished using a combination of strobes, lasers and Vari-Lites to flash, pulse and shift through the scenes.

Lawrence and Cutter's decision to use green lasers was partly based "on the intensity [of the light]," Cutter details. "Green is the most

Photos courtesy of Hype

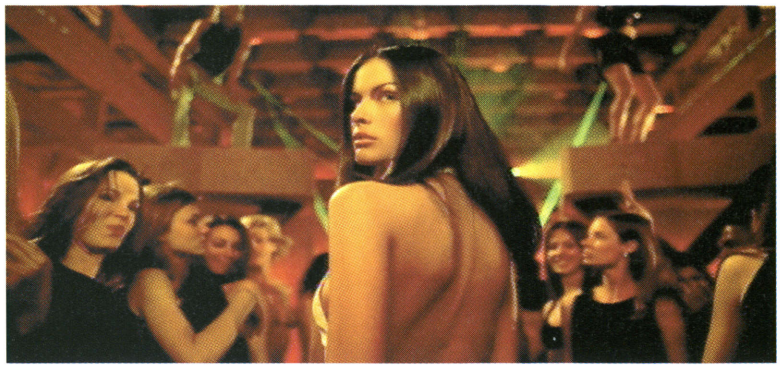
intense by far." Green was also an appropriate foil to the overall red-and-gold color scheme. "It provided a nice contrast," he says. "It's not dominant in the frame."

Cutter and Lawrence had both worked with lasers on other projects, including a Mel C video they did together. "The key with lasers is that you need a lot of smoke," Cutter discloses. "They read really well at the open end of the lens, but farther out you need a lot of smoke."

According to Lawrence, lasers work best when they're shooting toward the camera, when they almost act like a backlight. "They look good when they hit the lens and when they pass through people," he observes. Cutter says if the lasers aren't shooting toward the camera, they won't really read — but at the same time, safety is always a concern. "If you shoot a laser straight down the lens, you cannot look down the eyepiece," he warns. "We always had them just off the edge. If we did aim them right [into the lens], it would have been just a locked-off shot."

In shots where the lasers were used with crowds of actors, the technicians were careful to aim them over people's heads. "They always like to find someplace to end the beam so no one gets hurt," says Cutter. At one point, for example, the lasers were focused on a big concrete strip over the heads of the camera crew. While a laser beam itself is too focused to illuminate objects along its path, it does create a reflective bounce light where it terminates. To prevent a green bounce from spilling off the concrete strip, Cutter covered it with 12' x 12' solids.

Working with lasers also meant running the camera at a higher frame rate. "Lasers look much better [in slow motion]," says Lawrence. "At 24 frames per second, they can get 'strobey' and they're not quite as impressive." Shooting at high speed also gave Lawrence more artistic options throughout the spot. "I basically shot everything at 96 fps so we could choose the best moment," he says. In particular, the extra frames gave him the option of doing speed ramps in post.



In addition to strobes and lasers, Cutter used 24 Vari-Lites. Vari-Lite provides its own operators, who program elaborate moves into the system. "It's like a rock 'n' roll light or concert light," says Cutter. "It pans and tilts and rotates on a program, so the light can do whatever you want." Many times, Vari-Lites were aimed directly into the camera, with a dash of smoke added to aid the effect.

The timing for strobes, lasers and Vari-Lites was based on a music track played so the actors and dancers would have something to reference. "We weren't syncing it precisely," notes Cutter, "but everyone had a sense of where they needed to be. We basically set a pattern to [that track]."

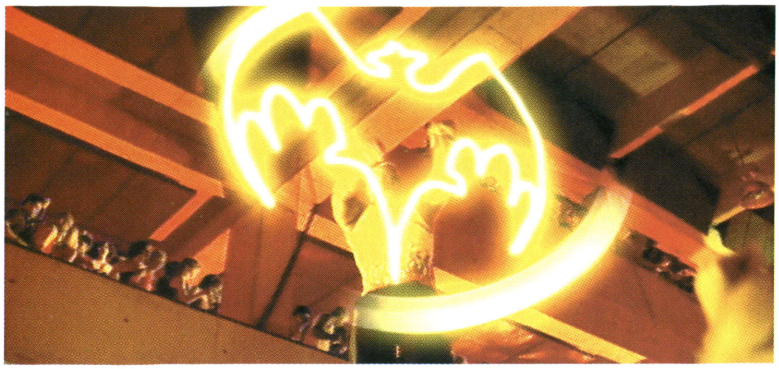
Apart from all of the special lighting techniques, Cutter used more traditional 5Ks, 10Ks and 2K Blondes for his ambient lighting, as well as Kino Flos for close-ups. Three-light cyc strips ringed the structure's interior. He also lit all of the columns in the plant with Par cans on the floor that were aimed straight up. "In general, I like to use softer light," he says, "but we had quite a lot of lights, and we pretty much maxed out two generators."

To get the red-and-gold look, Cutter heavily gelled the ambient light. "I don't think we ever keyed anybody or anything with white light," he recalls. For red, he used Lee 019 Fire, and for gold, a combination of light amber with a ¼ magenta. "Red is such a weird color to look at and photograph because it's so intense," the cameraman explains. "If you have a lot of red, it will alter the other colors. Amber looked really green because of all the red; it wasn't an attractive combination. We added the magenta to [the amber] so it wasn't so contrasty with red."

Cutter points out that red is a difficult color to read even with a meter. "Your meters tell you one thing, but you have to interpret it. The film stock eats up [the light] because of the way the film is layered;

Opposite and this page: A recent Bacardi commercial features three young men who visit an exclusive underground nightclub. Cinematographer Jeff Cutter used a combination of strobes, lasers and Vari-Lites to light the spot, which was filmed in a Canadian water plant.

Members Only



A hologram of Bacardi's famous bat logo, created by the visual-effects company Method, appears at the end of the spot.

it's less sensitive to the color red, so you usually have to overexpose red a bit."

Cutter was able to pause the Vari-Lites's movements to read them; the strobes he usually read by eye, metering for the ambience and then letting the flash of the strobe provide occasional variety. For the lasers, he took a spot reading by lining himself up with the axis of the beam. While a laser might read four or five stops brighter than the surrounding light, it's such a small source that Cutter felt he could get away with it.

In general, he lit the overall space to a base exposure of T1.4, then built up from there. "I always feel as if clubs should be pretty dark," he says. "I set basic ambience about two stops below my exposure." Cutter notes that underexposing is something he's learned to do over the course of his career. "When I first started shooting, I was so nervous if I was one stop under," he remembers. "I find that the more stuff I shoot, the more latitude there is to go darker. It's amazing how dark you can go and still see what's going on. You can go four stops down, and the audience can see what's [happening]."

Cutter still had to use a fast stock for the spot, but he had to be careful to prevent potential problems for the visual-effects crew later on. "They prefer [Kodak's] 200T tungsten stock for effects, but that really wasn't an option," he observes. Striving for a balance between the needs of the visual-effects artists and the on-set demands, Cutter used Kodak Vision 500T 5279.

Because of his need for an extra stop, Cutter selected Zeiss Superspeed lenses for the Arriflex 435 he used on the shoot. "I prefer the Cookes, but the Zeiss lenses are T1.3 as opposed to T2," he explains. He also chose to go with lenses in the wider focal range. "The 14mm through the 25mm is mostly where Francis likes to shoot. The 18mm and 25mm were our 'hero' lenses."

Cutter stayed away from filtration. "Everything was clean," he asserts. "I didn't need to do any color filtration, and unless I'm doing true beauty, I tend not to diffuse." He says he often finds that many men and women don't require diffusion — particularly on a project like the Bacardi ad. "The girls were young and attractive, so they didn't really need it." He also feels diffusion takes some of the edge away from the imagery, which he didn't want for a spot like this.

In contrast to the high-energy lighting, the camera movement was fairly low-key. "It was all pretty straightforward — either lock-offs or dolly ins or outs," he details. "We didn't dutch or anything. I don't think there was any handheld. The moves were all pretty clean."

Having worked with Lawrence for such a long time, Cutter has a sense of what the director wants in terms of composition. "He likes to see lots of ceiling and lots of headroom," the cameraman says. "He loves low angles. A lot of our composition was based on that. We end up doing a lot of stuff with intersecting lines, using the architecture. There were lots of angles where you're seeing down the line of the club — you see the balconies and the columns supporting the balconies."

Because the production had only 50 extras, crowd-duplication effects were necessary to fill the balconies and make the water plant look like a crowded nightclub. Originally, the plan was to shoot several passes of people on different floors, then move them around as necessary in post. Time ran short during the shoot, though, so visual-effects artist Chris Staves of Method, who was on set to help supervise, suggested shooting a small group of people against bluescreen and then duplicating them later in post.

Staves cites the Bacardi shoot as a perfect example of why it's important for a visual-effects facility to have a representative on set. "We try to send an artist for every job," he says. "In the end, it's beneficial to both the production company and to us." For the Bacardi job, he and producer Sue Troyan were on hand

for both days of the shoot to make sure all of the necessary elements were photographed.

While in Cancun, the Bacardi executives had seen partygoers playing with glow sticks, and they knew they wanted to use them in the commercial. "They're difficult [to photograph] because they don't give out that much light," notes Cutter. "You have to shoot 500 ASA stock wide open to make them bright." Another problem is that the sticks' illumination doesn't last that long. Composed of various-colored tubes containing a phosphorous substance, the sticks last 10 to 15 minutes, but they are brightest within the first minute then begin to fade.

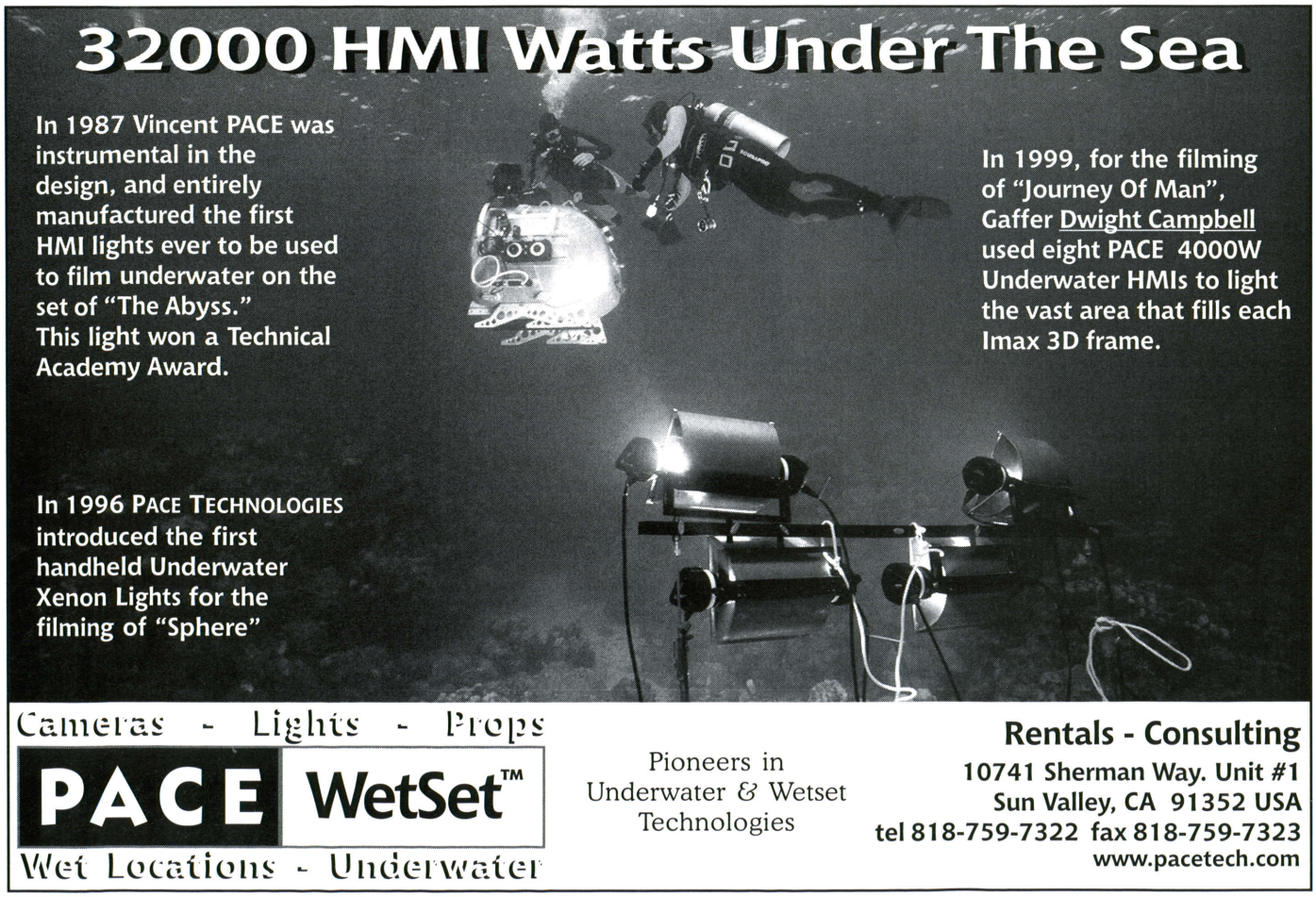
The glow sticks were later manipulated in post. Staves says that although the sticks' movements looked like streaks of light in person, they strobed on film. "I actually ended up painting out the real glow sticks," he reveals. "I made them longer and more streaky."

At the end of the commercial, a man uses the glow sticks to draw the shape of the Bacardi bat in the air. "[The actor] practiced that a few times, roughly getting it close," Staves says. "I matched that to the real bat logo, then spent a couple days working on the transition from him drawing to the bat logo."

In addition to their work on the crowd duplication and glow sticks, Method artists added a few other effects to the commercial. One was a hologram of Bacardi's bat logo, which floats in midair above the crowd. "That was a big concern of the agency and the client," recalls Staves. "They weren't able to envision it initially, but they were very pleased with the result." The logo was initially created in Adobe Illustrator, then imported into Method's Discreet Logic Inferno, where it was extruded and given beveled edges.

According to Staves, several different versions of the spot had to be made, including one for the U.S. market, one for the Internet and one for Canada, which has some peculiar restrictions on what can be shown. "In Canada, we couldn't show them swiping the card in the reader," he elaborates. "I guess it implies exclusivity." Instead, the men gain entrance to the club after a hand (belonging to Staves) is stamped. Another peculiar Canadian stipulation, Staves remembers, is that when a waitress is shown carrying a tray of glasses, they all have to be full.

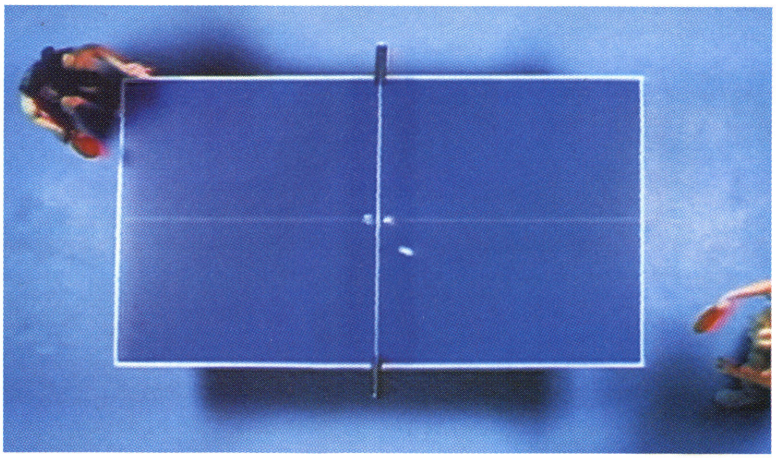
Ultimately, though, all of the spots capture the same feeling that Lawrence and Cutter set out to convey. "The job was really about the lasers and the interactive light — making it exciting and sexy," Lawrence enthuses. ■



High Concepts

Director Mike Mills and cinematographer Joaquin Baca-Asay score with a unique music video for the French electronic-music duo Air.

by Neil Matsumoto



Not to be confused with the bass player for the U.S. rock group R.E.M., Mike Mills first received attention in the music world as a cutting-edge graphic artist, designing record covers for Nineties alternative rock heroes such as the Beastie Boys, Sonic Youth and Cibo Matto. After seeing Errol Morris's 1988 documentary *The Thin Blue Line*, which successfully maintained that a man had been wrongly convicted of murder in Texas, Mills began considering filmmaking as a career. "I was always interested in the documentary and educational films Charles and Ray Eames had done," says Mills. "*The Thin Blue Line,* from a graphic designer's point of view, really screamed out to me as [something] I should be doing because it was such a visually diagrammatic film."

Like the Eameses, who designed furniture, films and architecture, Mills found it natural to switch mediums, because he'd been creating visuals using media such as illustrations, graphics and photography. Although he lacked training as a filmmaker, Mills began asking many of his graphics contacts to allow him to shoot one of their music videos for little or no money. Frank Black and The Blues Explosion allowed him to shoot their music videos, and legendary jazz saxophonist Ornette Coleman let him shoot a documentary about Coleman's philosophy of music. By working with a concept-oriented style rather than a consistent visual style, Mills was able to freely play with a band's imagery and identity.

Mills began directing for the Propaganda Films subsidiary production company Satellite, but he and fellow director Roman Coppola soon formed their own company, the Director's Bureau. Their plan is to work on any type of project that interests them. "At most [production] companies, you do either commercials or music videos," explains Mills.

Photos courtesy of Director's Bureau

"I do lots of documentaries and short films, and as co-owners of the Bureau, we can make the projects fit our career rather than [fitting] our career into a box." Since starting the company, Mills has directed music videos for such diverse acts as Moby, Pulp, Les Rythmes Digitales and Pond, as well as a Gap ad inspired by *West Side Story*. But in the music-video world, he is perhaps best-known for his work with the French electronic duo Air.

Air initially commissioned Mills to design their album cover because they had been impressed with his previous work. He proposed that he should also direct their first video and ad. Air agreed, and the duo and Mills immediately began creating the *Moon Safari* album cover and the video for the single "Sexy Boy." But Mills didn't anticipate how fast Air would take off in Europe, especially in England, where the six-foot-tall standees Mills had drawn of the duo were in record shops everywhere. Mills has since created two more music videos for Air, as well as the DVD tour documentary *Eating Sleeping Waiting and Playing*.

Perhaps the most dazzling video of the year is the one Mills made for Air's second single, "Kelly Watch the Stars," which has the cool, detached look of a Damien Hirst installation piece. Mills says he wanted to create something that would look entirely different from the "Sexy Boy" video — so different that people would think a different director had shot it. "Kelly Watch the Stars" features a strange game of Ping-Pong between two beautiful women; the pair are observed by well-dressed spectators who look as though they're concentrating on a chess match. The match is intercut with the two members of Air playing the retro video game Pong on their television at home. During the table-tennis match, one of the players, Kelly (so named as an homage to Jacqueline Smith's character on *Charlie's Angels*), gets hit by the ball and knocked unconscious. The musical duo then appears in paramedic uniforms to revive her with mouth-to-mouth resuscitation in order to finish the Ping-Pong match and their match of Pong.

To come up with a concept for a music video, Mills says he likes to play the song repeatedly for a day; he likens this process to a form of brainwashing, noting that it spurs ideas that he's not always consciously aware of. "I've always liked Ping-Pong, and I'm always attracted to treating things in an inappropriate way," says Mills. "I thought it would be great to treat Ping-Pong as a formal event, with everybody in suits solemnly watching."

For the shoot, Mills worked with cinematographer Joaquin Baca-Asay, who has photographed almost everything on Mills's reel, including the Gap *West Side Story* commercial and music videos for Moby's "Run On" and Les Rhythms Digitales' "Sometimes." Baca-Asay has also shot 10 independent films in the past nine years, including *Low*, *Hired Hands* and *Sleepover*. According to Mills, his relationship with the cinematographer is his most significant collaboration. "My reel is all sorts of different things, and Joaquin is very adept at doing [all of] it," explains Mills. "I'll say something like, 'This time we're doing film noir, dead stuffed animals,' and Joaquin understands what I'm thinking, realizes it and shoots it."

Baca-Asay says Mills usually comes to him armed with pictures from photographers such as William Eggelston. "One of Mike's biggest strengths is framing; he's very much about the edge of the frame, and that's something that's become

Opposite and this page: The music video for Air's "Kelly Watch the Stars" features a Ping-Pong match attended by a nattily dressed crowd.

High Concepts

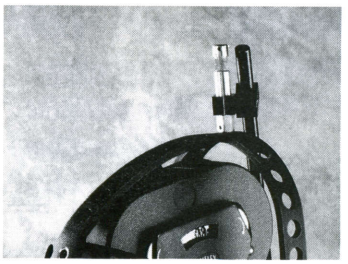
One of the competitors is knocked out during the match, and the men of Air abandon their game of Pong (opposite page) to resuscitate her.

extremely vogue," he notes.

Baca-Asay shot the video on a three-wall set in the 1.85:1 aspect ratio. He used a high-speed Panastar camera because he felt that Panavision's lenses were the best. Although he had a full set of Primo prime lenses on hand, he actually shot the entire video with a Primo 11:1 (24-275mm) T2.8 zoom, one of his favorites; the cinematographer has photographed entire movies with it in the past. He used a ProMist on a few shots, but maintains that he doesn't usually like the look of filtration.

The most important tool Baca-Asay prefers to have on the set is a jib arm, and he uses it on almost everything he shoots. "You can do boom-up moves and swinging moves [with it], but most of what Mike and I have done [has involved] static and very fussy, exact frames," explains Baca-Asay. "The jib arm allows you to get the camera exactly where you want it without having to discuss it with anybody else."

Mills wanted an extremely sharp look for the video, but because of their small budget the filmmakers didn't have all the lighting they'd hoped for. Baca-Asay chose the 200 ASA Kodak EXR 5293 film stock because it was the sharpest of the fast film stocks he'd used. Mills's favorite visual references are films from the Seventies, and he emulates the era's



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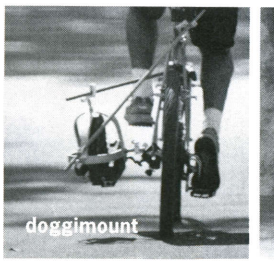

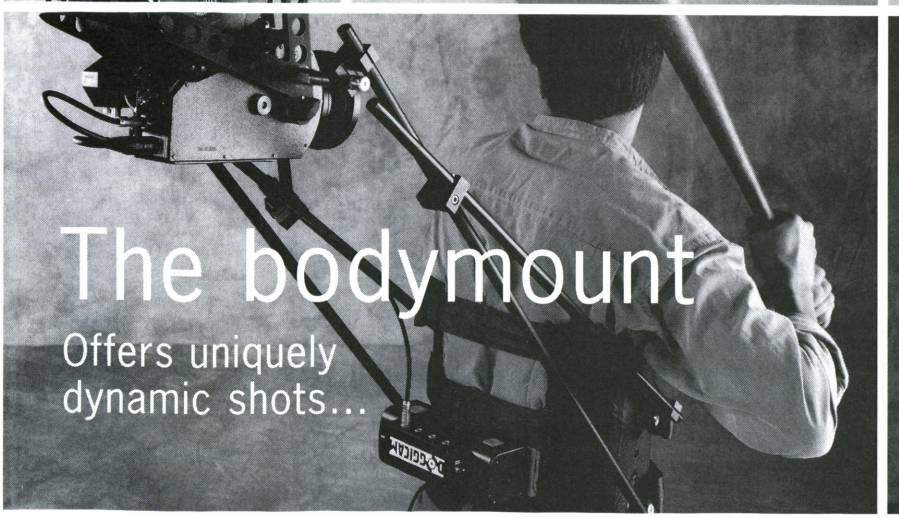

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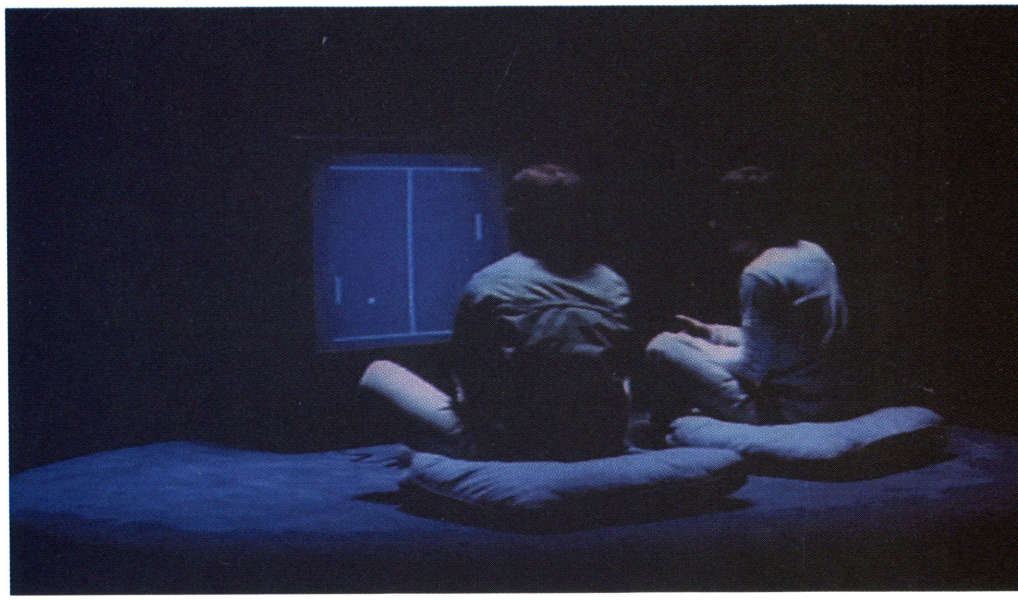
look during the telecine process by desaturating colors so they come out looking soft and real, yet very shapely with strong contrast. Because of this, the video ends up looking more like a print.

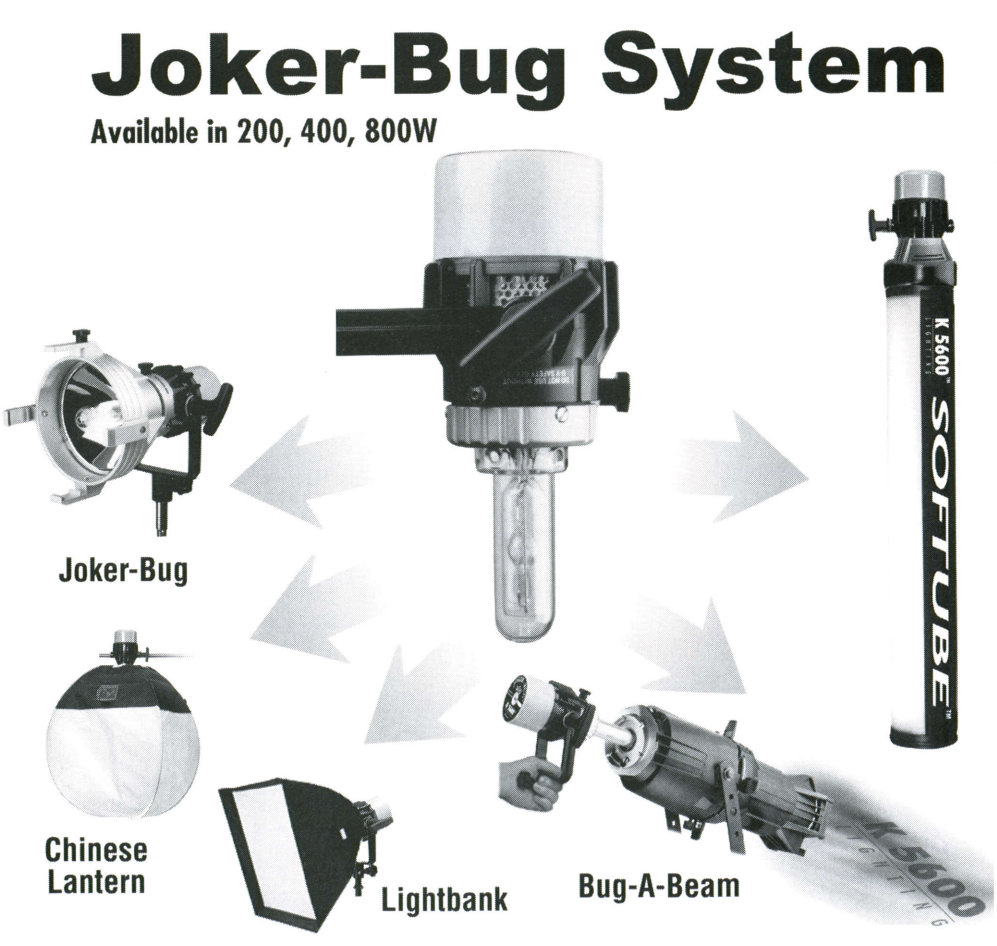
Mills gave Baca-Asay video footage of actual Ping-Pong matches so the cinematographer could approximate that lighting yet make it somewhat expressionistic. The director also drew up extremely detailed storyboards. "The job was so precise," says Baca-Asay. "We hung the storyboards on the jib arm, and I would literally just look at the board, then match [it]." The filmmakers spiked every camera position on the floor, as well as the height of the camera and lens, knowing they wouldn't have time to work it out as they shot.

Because the crew had so many shots to do with little time to relight, Baca-Asay hung every light he could get from the rental house. He used



20Ks and Chimeras to light the Ping-Pong players. He toplit the audience members separately using large soft lights separated from each other. All lights were placed on dimmers so that the crew could move quickly from shot to shot without the need to frequently reposition the lights.

The entire video was shot in one day: six hours for lighting and six for shooting. "I probably wouldn't have done it as well if I'd had every-



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High Concepts

Director Mike Mills seeks divine inspiration.

thing I wanted," admits Baca-Asay. "[The budget] gave me some boundaries with which to work."

The video features a few minor visual effects, but world-class Ping-Pong players provided real game action. Mills hired doubles — one from the U.S. Olympic table-tennis team, and the other a nationally ranked player — for shots that show both women playing the match. The actresses were used in shots showing one woman hitting the ball to an offscreen target.

One of the things Mills finds attractive about filmmaking is that after doing graphic design alone in a room for so many years, he now gets to collaborate with people. Although much of his work is design-oriented, almost all of Mills's videos tell some sort of story — they just have fewer linear ideas behind them. That might be one reason why his videos rarely appear on MTV in America, and why most of his videos have been created for European bands and record companies.

Mills realizes that he toes a difficult line as a commercial artist; record companies expect top-notch music-video directors to be artists, yet also work within commercial constraints. "It's a little bit like the American economy, where there's only the super-high class — $1 million-and-up videos — and the weirder videos that are usually below $50,000," he comments. "There's no middle class anymore." ■

New Products & Services

compiled by Douglas Bankston

Industry Networking Hits New Peak with NeTune's ShowRunner

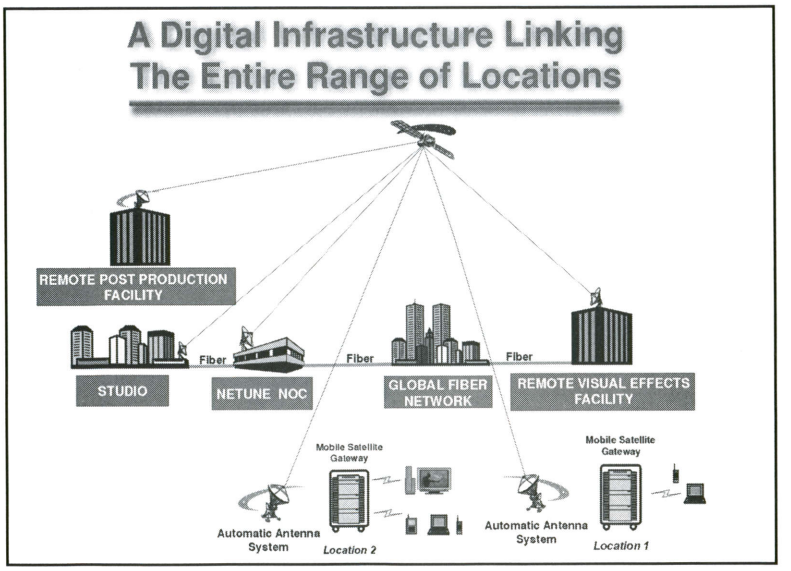
by Debra Kaufman

NeTune Communications recently unveiled ShowRunner, the latest entrant in the arena of long-distance networking for film and television productions. Whereas most networking systems over the past 10 years have been created by the telcos and satellite companies that provide the connection, ShowRunner is a creation from one of the industry's own — in fact, one of the ASC's own.

Curtis Clark, ASC (*The Draughtsman's Contract, Dominick & Eugene, Extremities*) has been working on the creation of this secure, broadband, fully meshed, private satellite network since 1996. Only a few months after its July 2000 launch, the first commercial trial of the ShowRunner system is now underway on the Warner Bros. film *Harry Potter: The Sorcerer's Tale*. The production is shooting in London under director Chris Columbus and cinematographer John Seale, ASC, ACS; NeTune will be used to transmit visual effects from Sony Imageworks in Los Angeles to the film's visual effects supervisor Rob Legato. Other commercial deployments in the entertainment industry are also in the works.

"We'll stress-test the system and its functionality so it's deemed ready for prime-time deployment," explains Clark. "That's to validate all the things we are anticipating and to get an on-site, hands-on understanding of how the clients will actually use it. There's nothing like being in the field with them as they use it to get the best feedback. If there are elements that need reinforcement, we'll get real-world feedback."

From the studio's point of view, ShowRunner has been a long time coming. "ShowRunner will provide a much-needed missing link," says Joe Hartwick, executive vice president at 20th Century Fox Feature Film Group. "NeTune has developed an innovative



system that will both enhance and streamline the filmmaking process. We are confident this technology will be embraced by the entertainment community and are excited to showcase this to our filmmakers."

As a hybrid fiber-satellite network, ShowRunner can deliver high-quality film dailies, graphics, CGI images, edited sequences, text data, voice telephony and video-conferencing via satellite. Satellite and broadband wireless technologies permit transfer of images and data at speeds up to 45 Mbps, good enough to support bandwidth-intensive applications such as high-quality digital film dailies and CGI visual-effects shots. ShowRunner offers ease of use, with the incorporation of Web-based applications that require only a browser to share information. The Web browser also supports transmission of lower-bandwidth data for functions such as storyboards or accounting.

"ShowRunner services will be the first implementation of a truly converged digital network using geostationary satellites," Clark declares. "You can share the type of data you want to exchange with other people as real-time collaboration, or as annotations that can be forwarded to a recipient for viewing at a later time. For example, a director shooting a film in North America and at locations around the world can show dailies and provide other information to studio executives in Los Angeles. You may want to send edited sequences of a film and hold a video teleconference to talk about it. Perhaps the visual-effects facility wants to ask the director about the color of a certain element of a composited shot, or the studio executive wants to check certain costs."

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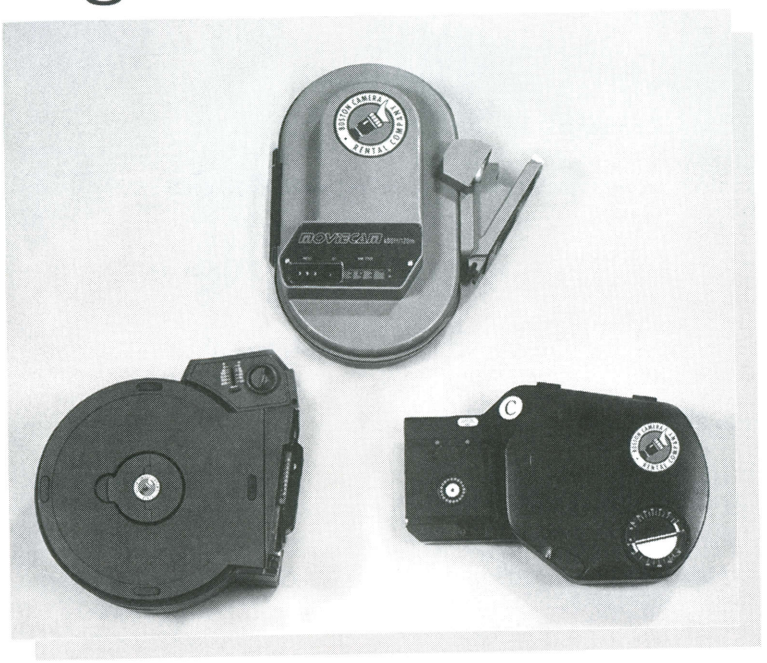

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ShowRunner also offers a "nomadic" piece: a rapidly deployed, easily shipped antenna system that will allow a production to send dailies almost anywhere in the world, allowing a temporary networking in far-flung regions that wouldn't be possible with a fixed fiber-optic connection. "Productions shooting in North America and at locations around the world will be able to transmit high-quality dailies and share key production data with studio executives and other collaborators in an ultra-secure and interactive environment," says Clark. "They will be able to teleconference and share data, voice, image and text, with no limits imposed by time or distance."

Security was a major issue from the beginning. As Clark wryly reports, one studio executive said his three main concerns, in order of importance, were "security, security, security." With military-level encryption provided by IBM, Clark says the studios have nothing to worry about. "This is the strongest encryption ever deployed. It's 256-bit encryption with multiple layers, and we'll be the first to deploy it," he notes.

Basic security is provided by the fact that ShowRunner works as a separate Intranet for each production. A production's producers and creatives can choose from among more than 40 preproduction, production and postproduction functions that are tightly integrated. Among those functions are storyboards, script breakdowns, shooting schedules, camera and production reports, call sheets, accounting/cost reports, asset tracking, wrap reports, live remote collaboration, home viewing, digital nonlinear editing and remote mixing.

Providing a function aimed at cinematographers, ShowRunner incorporates Kodak PreView software, which is designed to enable cinematographers to preview "looks" by using digital still images as a reference. Clark observes that the ability to transmit these images will make communication between cinematographers and directors more efficient, as well as help them coordinate live-action shooting with CGI elements being created at visual-effects facilities. "The biggest concern

is having efficient, effective lines of communication with the people who are most critical to the cinematographer: the timer and the colorist, the two people the cinematographer has to relate to in a meaningful way to get good dailies," says Clark, who notes that high-quality digital film dailies will replace traditionally sub-par video dailies. "Video dailies are frequently VHS, played back on non-professional equipment with no calibration standard. Every element in the chain conspires against predictability, quality and consistency. We put those qualities back in, and put it in a package that gives real-time communication links with the colorist and timer so they can fine-tune the look.

"For example, a scene may have been planned one way but shot another way. Reference data needs to be sent to the colorist or timer so they understand what's happening. This is a fail-safe way [to ensure] that data is communicated efficiently and reliably to that person within an effective time frame."

ShowRunner emerged from Clark's musings about how digital technology would affect filmmaking "in new and imaginative ways." He explains, "I was fascinated with the simplicity of the Web's point-and-click functionality. It employed an easy-to-use graphic interface that made it possible for people all around the world to communicate with images and text in an interactive environment."

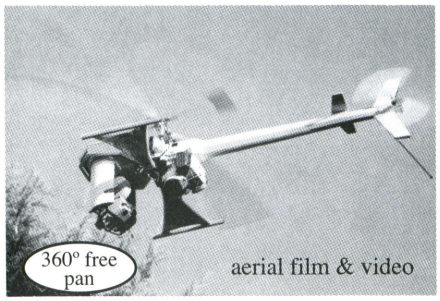
But Clark, who is president and CEO of NeTune Communications, also realized that the Internet infrastructure wasn't the right way to go, because the data rate would be insufficient for high-quality images and a network based on the Internet wouldn't be able to guarantee service. Clark concluded that it had to be a private network, and that fiber alone would be too restrictive. He was awarded a patent in 1999 for the entire ShowRunner systems integration.

Clark's earliest supporter in his efforts to develop ShowRunner was the Creative Artists Agency's Media Lab, a site that introduces CAA clients to new media. CAA acted as a facilitator, introducing Clark to a variety of high-technology providers. In addition to CAA, NeTune Communications' partners include Hughes Electronics, PanAmSat, Hughes' DirecTV, IBM, and Lucent Technologies.

NeTune's high-tech partners provided $25 million in equity funding, as well as substantial technical expertise and support. The NeTune Communications Network Operating Center will be housed at DirecTV's broadcast center in Marina Del Rey. PanAmSat will offer global satellite connectivity through its privately owned fleet of satellites, which reach 98 percent of the world's population. Hughes Electronics and Hughes's DirecTV will provide advanced satellite, digital video, and entertainment- and communications-networking expertise. IBM is providing advanced digital networking, server and storage technology, security, and systems integration services, as well as global-systems operation and vendor financing. Lucent Technologies is providing high-res, state-of-the-art digital imaging and fiber and wireless networking technologies. CAA is ensuring close synergy with many of the industry's top directors, producers, actors and other professionals.

Clark says he has described and demonstrated ShowRunner to representatives of major studios, as well as producers, and has received positive feedback. The fact that Warner Bros. and 20th Century Fox has agreed to beta-test the system on a production says much about the studio's confidence in the system. The studios' interest in ShowRunner, says Clark, directly relates to the desire to create economic savings. The system is designed not simply to enhance creativity, but also to contain production costs, helping filmmakers navigate today's more complex and pressured working environment. "The economic benefits are tangible," insists Clark. "On a fundamental level, the ability to exchange data more efficiently will bring a direct savings because of the time and money it takes to get things from Point A to Point B.

"But the more important benefits



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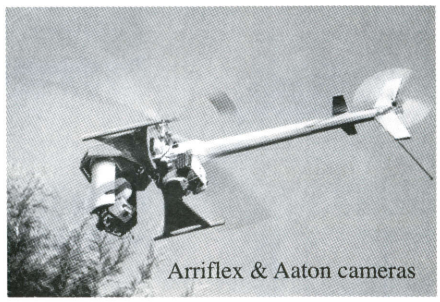

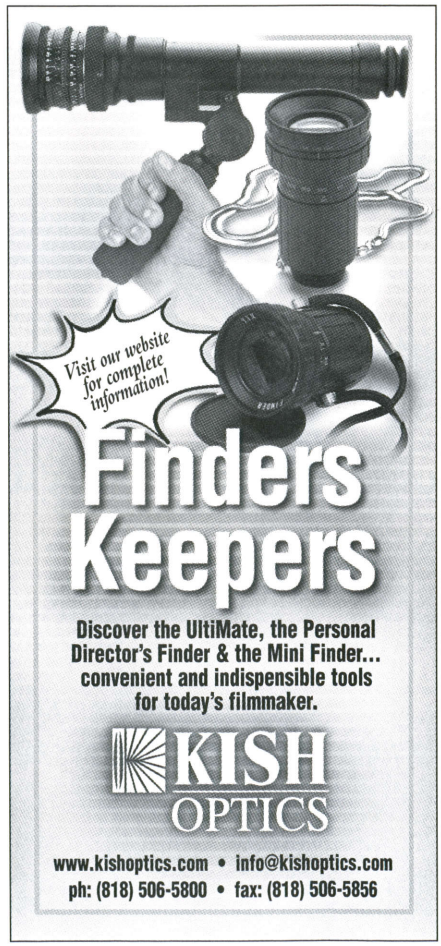

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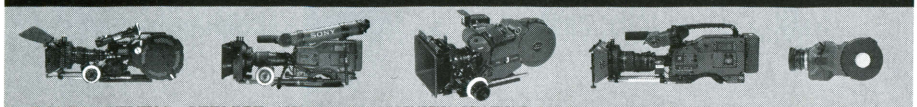

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may be on another level," he continues. "There is collaborative power, and there is workload efficiency; these two things go hand-in-hand and translate into economic savings. With an enhanced grid of collaboration, with people working more efficiently together in a creative sense, they can make more informed decisions. Better communication means there will be fewer problems down the road, which saves time and money — and will enhance creative results, we hope. In a collaboration-based art form, there's little if any margin for error."

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Points East

Stopping Time on a Dime

by Eric Rudolph

Time-lapse cinematography, long a staple of television commercials, music videos and documentaries, is being used more often in feature films, according to Wayne Goldwyn, a leading practitioner of the time-compressing technique. Although the bulk of Goldwyn's income comes from sales of his stock footage to commercial producers via The Image Bank, his work has also found great favor with director Oliver Stone. Stone enlisted Goldwyn and his Santa Barbara-based company, Mr. Time Lapse, to produce material he used in *Natural Born Killers, Nixon* and, most prominently, *U Turn.*

The controversial Stone is not Goldwyn's only feature-film customer, however. He recently completed time-lapse work for three other features, including title-segment work on Harold Ramis's *Bedazzled,* footage for Gary Fleder's *Impostor,* and a highly complex shot for the upcoming film *Serendipity,* directed by Peter Chelsom.

The *Serendipity* assignment highlighted the challenging complexities of the specialized time-lapse cinematography field. Goldwyn was asked to film a Manhattan clock tower for three consecutive days, exposing one frame every six minutes; on the third day, as the clock approached 3 p.m., the speeding clock hands were, on film, to begin slowing down and finally stop as they struck 3 o'clock. This was to be followed — in one uninterrupted shot — by a crane move (filmed at sound speed) from the clock's face down the side of the building. One of the key challenges was the obvious fact that exterior light conditions vary greatly during a 24-hour period. An iris-control device to adjust the lens aperture to the various brightness levels was an unacceptable solution. "Imagine going from T16 to T1.4 — your image quality would disintegrate" and the depth of field would change, Goldwyn notes.

Photo courtesy of Wayne Goldwyn

Time-lapse cinematographer Wayne Goldwyn takes a break on location while filming a Manhattan clock tower over three consecutive days for the upcoming film *Serendipity.* The tent nearby sheltered the Norris LPC 90, a crystal-controlled intervalometer, which Goldwyn used with a Mitchell/Fries 35mm motion-picture camera.

A key piece of equipment for such sophisticated time-lapse work is the Norris LPC 90 (LPC stands for Light Priority Controller). The device is a crystal-controlled intervalometer that uses a spot meter continually focused on an illumination reference point to provide light readings that serve as the basis for adjusting the motion-picture camera's shutter speed, thus producing the proper exposure as light levels rise and fall. (An intervalometer is a time-lapse cinematography device that can be set to trip the shutter of a motion-picture camera at various intervals.)

In the case of the *Serendipity* clock-tower sequence, the exposures ranged from 1/15 of a second in bright sunlight to four minutes at night. Goldwyn says he and his crew had a 13-stop range to handle from day to night, "and the Norris LPC was the key to accomplishing this assignment. It is a revolutionary tool that gives one tremendous exposure range."

While Goldwyn's camera position was being readied on one part of the roof of the clock-tower building, two three-person lighting crews assembled 5K lighting instruments on nearby buildings to light the tower during the night. "The nighttime lighting was tricky, because if the clock tower was too bright, the sky and surrounding cityscape would go to black," Goldwyn explains. "At the same time, it had to be bright enough so that the night exposures would fit into the six minute intervals between time-lapse frames!"

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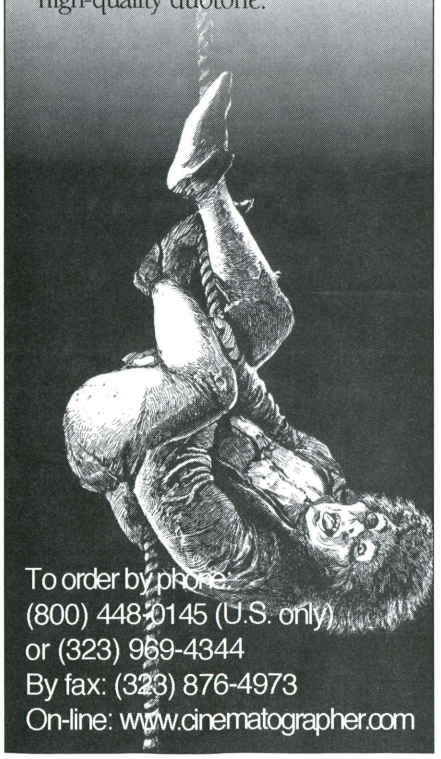

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second is the shortest exposure time typically possible with motorized time-lapse work, Goldwyn normally uses the slowest film stock available and adds significant neutral-density filtration to get a stop of around T8 or T11. Because *Serendipity* cinematographer John de Borman, BSC (*Hamlet, Saving Grace*) had selected Fuji stock for the picture, Goldwyn used Fuji's Super F-64D 8521 (ISO 64) for the time-lapse segment.

The lights were turned on at 5 o'clock each night and turned off at 8 the next morning. "The lighting crews had to sit with the lights during that entire time," Goldwyn notes. "The light setup also had to be redundant, in case a bulb failed." These requirements, on a union film, helped bring the budget for the three-day shoot to approximately $200,000, according to Goldwyn. In addition, crewmembers were stationed on the clock tower to provide atmospheric set dressing. "The shot is supposed to be in winter, so they had to throw fake snow around," Goldwyn notes. This was a bit tricky during the longer exposures, because the crew had only a few minutes between exposures in which to sprinkle the snowflakes. "They had to duck and hide between exposures. However, during the longest exposures we didn't worry about them getting caught on camera. As long as they kept moving, they would ghost out and be invisible during a four-minute exposure."

After all of the preparation, shooting began on a hot and rainy August day. A special Mitchell/Fries 35mm motion-picture camera provided by Stone Cinema Engineering (and equipped with a video tap) was fitted with a Canon 18mm T1.5 lens and an ND9 filter and set on a Tulip crane pointed at the clock tower. The Norris LPC meter unit was housed in a nearby plywood shack and pointed at a carefully chosen illumination reference point on the tower. Backup power supplies and the rest of the Norris unit sat in a tent nearby. Scaffolding was built to protect the setup from the rain and wind. The camera, sitting a dozen feet up in the air on the crane, was securely braced with C-stands by key grip Gary Martone so that it would stay rock steady. "We started filming on a Monday afternoon and kept going until 1:30 Thursday afternoon," Goldwyn recalls.

Then the hard part began. The plan called for a gradual decrease in the time period between exposures so that, on film, the speeding clock hands would gradually slow down and then stop. At 1:30 p.m. on the final day of filming, Goldwyn disconnected the power to the camera's Norris motor as well as the Norris LPC intervalometer unit, and a standard intervalometer was quickly plugged in. Goldwyn then fired the next frame manually, six minutes after the previous frame. He then deducted one second off of each succeeding interval between manually fired frames over the course of 90 minutes, so that on film the clock's hands would gradually slow down. "I probably could have used a sophisticated computer along with a motion-control motor to do the ramp-down, but that would have meant many more pieces of gear and therefore more risks," he explains. "I knew I could do it myself using a quartz timer, so I kept it simple."

When the last time-lapse frame was exposed, the clockmaster stopped the clock and the camera was released from its C-stand constraints and set to run at 24 frames per second. The clock and camera were then restarted and the crane dropped down the clock tower and passed over a fake wall, representing part of the building below. (Postproduction plans called for combining the end of the tower shot with another piece of film to create the impression that the camera had seamlessly gone from time-lapse mode on the clock face to sound speed, followed by a dolly move that ends on a window below.) The production of a long, expensive, one-take-only sequence was finally completed. ■

Eric Rudolph can be reached via e-mail at ***erudolph2@nyc.rr.com****.*

Books in Review

by Ray Zone

More Contemporary Cinematographers On Their Art
by Pauline B. Rogers
Focal Press
224 pps, paperbound ($19.95)
ISBN 0-240-80368-X

Pauline Rogers has assembled a sequel to her book *Contemporary Cinematographers On Their Art* that features a stellar array of directors of photography, many of whom are ASC members. The war stories each cinematographer relates provide an interesting picture of the diverse ways by which these individuals found entree into the motion picture business, as well as their unique approaches to the practice of cinematography. As a staff writer for *ICG* magazine, Rogers spends her days on movie and TV sets. "Telling cinematographers' stories in long form," she writes, "has allowed me to talk about the whole person — not just the details of his or her work."

For example, Nancy Schreiber, ASC is a pioneer among women cinematographers. One of only a handful of female ASC members, she is a talented artist who has worked on features, commercials, documentaries and music videos. Many of Schreiber's projects have been art-house films, such as Neil LaBute's *Your Friends & Neighbors* (1998). "Often, out of necessity," notes Schreiber, "one is forced to take risks in coverage and shooting style on modest films because there is no time for coverage from every angle possible with every lens imaginable." Clearly, Schreiber's creativity flourishes under these kinds of limitations.

In another profile, we learn that while working on a commercial and a feature, *Lady in White* (1988), cinematographer Daryn Okada was involved in a helicopter crash that laid him up for two full months in an Arizona hospital with paralyzed legs and a fractured back. He struggled back to health and went on to serve as director of photography on features such as *Captain Ron* (1992), *Airborne* (1993) and *Black Sheep* (1996).

The chapter on John Schwartzman, ASC opens at the 1999 ASC Awards dinner, when the cinematographer was in preproduction on a massive film, Michael Bay's upcoming period epic *Pearl Harbor*. "I grew up on film sets," observes Schwartzman. "My father was one of the first entertainment attorneys." Schwartzman got Francis Ford Coppola and George Lucas to write letters of recommendation to film school for him by beating them both on a bet while playing the board game Risk. He subsequently went on to become a top director of photography on large action films such as *The Rock* (1996), *Conspiracy Theory* (1997) and *Armageddon* (1999).

Dean Semler, ASC tells Rogers he likes to get the most out of minimal lighting. "Walk on a Dean Semler set," says Rogers, "and two things strike you immediately: there is ease and quiet around the camera, and there are as few lights exposing the story as possible." Semler notes, "You can make something dramatic with simple lighting, if you try." Starting out as a news cameraman in Australia, Semler made his mark with *The Road Warrior* (1981). Since then Semler has photographed such films as *Dances With Wolves* (1990), *The Bone Collector* (1999) and *Nutty Professor 2: The Klumps* (2000).

Dante Spinotti, ASC believes that each film he shoots has a particular language that should determine all choices made, from preproduction to editing. "The cinematography is an important part of that language," he

"...Maestro of digital production,
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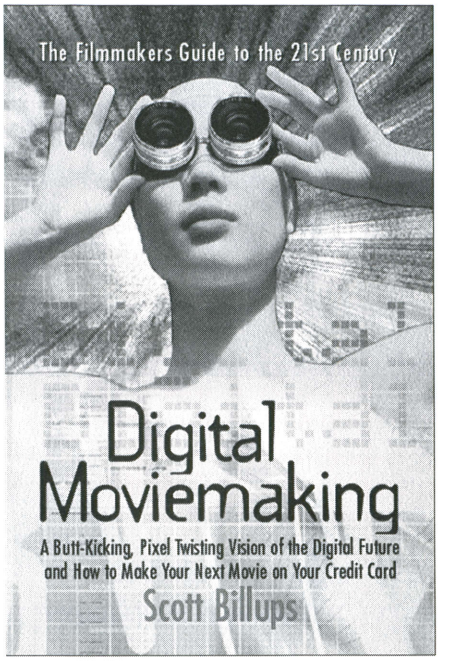

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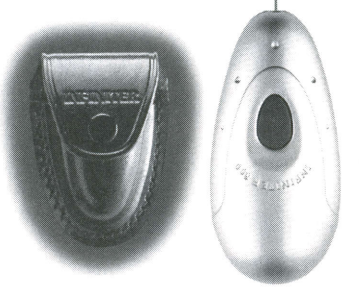

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says. Nominated for Academy Awards for his work on *L.A. Confidential* (1997) and *The Insider* (1999), Spinotti believes that the language of filmmaking is "intimate," and that the technological change in production techniques of the present day challenges cinematographers to reinterpret this specific language.

Closing out the book is an engaging chapter on Vilmos Zsigmond, ASC, who affirms that "lighting is the most important tool for the cinematographer." Zsigmond, one of the top directors of photography in the industry and the recipient of the ASC Lifetime Achievement Award in 1998, came to America in 1956 from his native Hungary. After working on low-budget features such as *The Incredibly Strange Creatures Who Stopped Living and Became Mixed Up Zombies* (1963), he went on to photograph a series of classic films that include *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* (1971), *The Deer Hunter* (1978), *Deliverance* (1972) and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977), for which he won an Academy Award.

Other directors of photography featured in this book include Peter James, ASC; Ward Russell, Mike Benson, Neil Roach and Ueli Steiger, ASC. Rogers' fine sequel to her first volume is indispensable for those interested in the art and craft of cinematography.

Missing Reels:
Lost Films of American and European Cinema
by Harry Waldman
McFarland & Company, Inc.
313 pps, casebound ($45.00)
ISBN 0-89950-601-1

Harry Waldman has provided a valuable if heartbreaking study for students of early cinema. With this new book and a previous work, *Scenes Unseen* (Classic Images, 1991), he shows us how much has disappeared by cataloguing lost films from the early years of motion-picture history. *Missing Reels* lists almost 1,000 from 15 countries, including the United States, that have not survived.

Waldman reports that more than 80 percent of all films made prior to World War I no longer exist. In addition, more than 60 percent of the films made from the war years to the sound era have disappeared. During that period in the United States, a huge number of films were produced; some 12,000 releases were reviewed in the pages of *Film Daily* at that time.

International filmmaking was prolific in the early years. The German, Italian and Austrian film industries suffered severely as a result of World War I. Most students of film are unaware of the film production that flourished in Spain between 1897 and 1923, or the rich heritage of Swedish cinema prior to the 1920s, when Hollywood stripped that country of its major filmmakers. The Dutch film industry was also quite prodigious at the time.

World War II devastated film production in Europe, and Waldman notes that 15 percent of the films made in America and Europe between 1930 and 1950 have vanished. The introduction of sound threw studios into a panic, and many of the early sound films were considered expendable because of their technical crudeness.

Did you know that for a short time in the 1930s, Paramount had a studio in Paris? Or that Paramount, MGM and Warner Bros. produced French-language films in Hollywood? Many of these films featured major stars and directors. Warner Bros.' 1931 *L'Aviateur* starred Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. and was based on an earlier version directed in English by Roy Del Ruth. MGM produced a French-language version in 1931 of their enormously successful 1930 film *The Big House;* the French version was recast with actors who spoke the language and featured the first screen appearance of Charles Boyer, who was imported specifically for his role.

For the most part, British silent films are a neglected chapter in film history. Michael Powell, the great director of *The Red Shoes* (1948), was quite prolific in the 1930s, and many of his earliest works distributed by Hollywood are lost. One of Alfred Hitchcock's earliest directorial efforts, *Number Thirteen* (1922), was closed down during production, and what remains of it has vanished. Also gone is Hitchcock's 1926 German-British film *The Mountain Eagle* (released in America as *Fear o' God*), a tale of illicit love among the hillbillies of Kentucky.

Out of 40,000 features made since 1896, the United States has lost the fewest. But much important material has vanished, including works directed by D.W. Griffith, Raoul Walsh, Tod Browning, King Vidor, Josef von Sternberg, Ernst Lubitsch and Erich von Stroheim. Among the vanished are films featuring John Barrymore, Rudolph Valentino, Clara Bow, Laurel and Hardy, and Lillian Gish.

Griffith was so productive that it's not surprising some of his films are lost, but particularly regrettable is the disappearance of his 1925 film *That Royale Girl*, which featured W.C. Fields in one of his best roles. The vanished 1918 Universal film *Roped* was an early directorial effort by John Ford, with Harry Carey in the leading role.

One of the first satires of the film capital, Paramount's 1923 film *Hollywood*, directed by James Cruze, has also been lost. In one of its scenes, an unemployed actor approaches a casting director, who gestures to a sign that reads "No Work Today." As the actor turns to face the camera, we discover that it's Fatty Arbuckle in an uncredited role. (Paramount had dropped Arbuckle from the lead in Cruze's *One Glorious Day* as a result of a scandal that shocked the industry.) In 1924, Cruze directed another comedy about Hollywood, also lost, called *Merton of the Movies*.

One experiences a mix of nostalgia and frustration while reading through Waldman's roll call of vanished films. As intriguing and important as these motion pictures are, barring a major miracle we will never see them. Waldman has provided an excellent compilation of our losses. ■

Ray Zone can be reached via e-mail at ***R3DZone@earthlink.net****.*

THE NICKELODEON

by Ray Zone & Chuck Roblin

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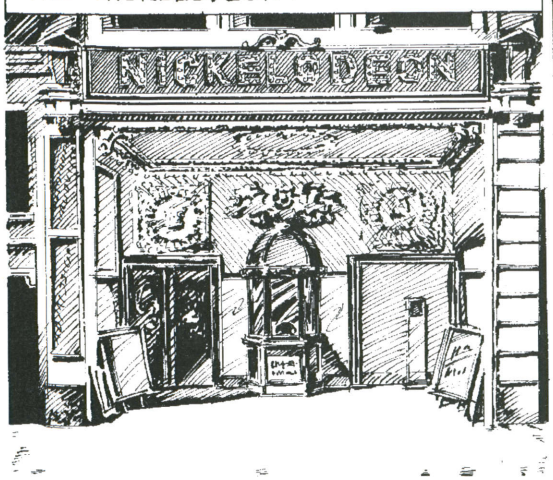

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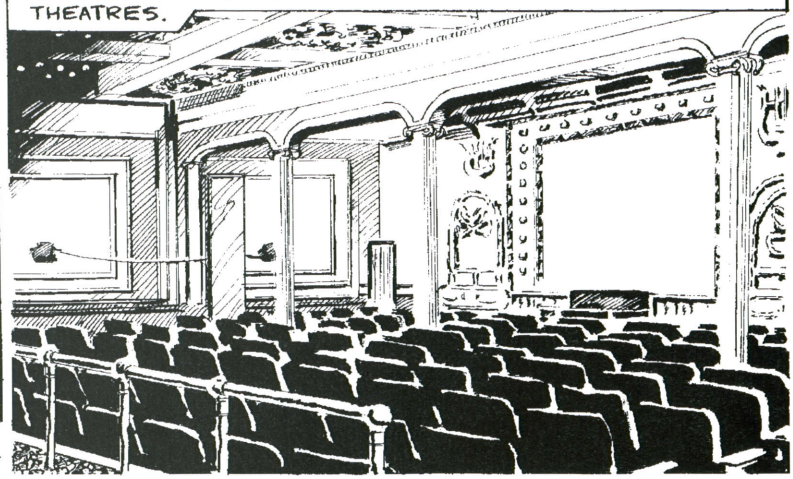

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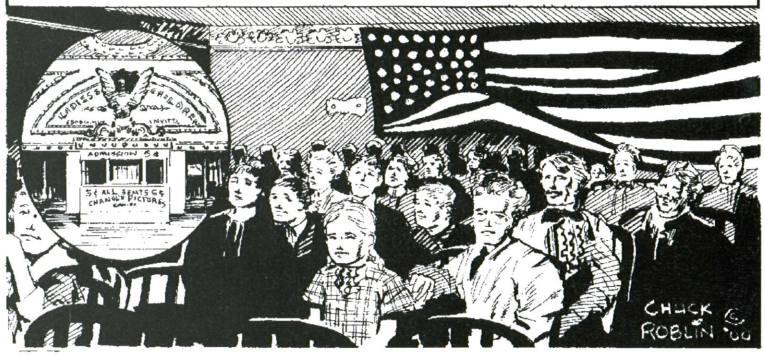

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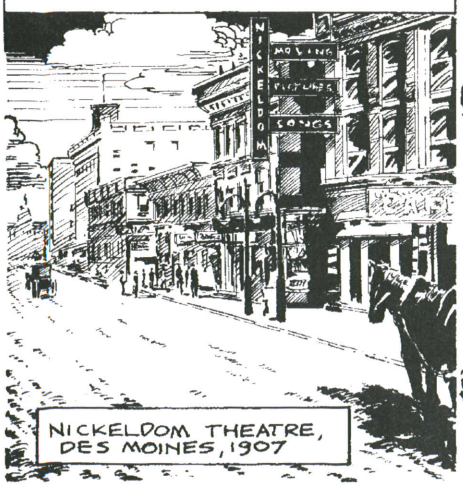

NICKELDOM THEATRE, DES MOINES, 1907

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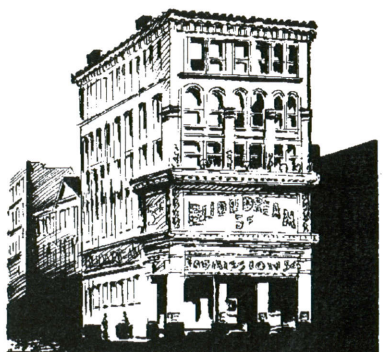

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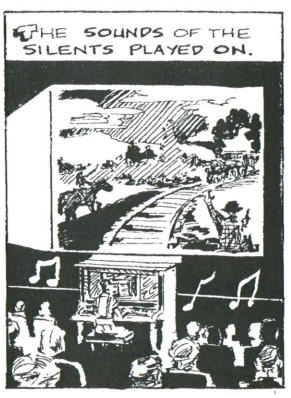

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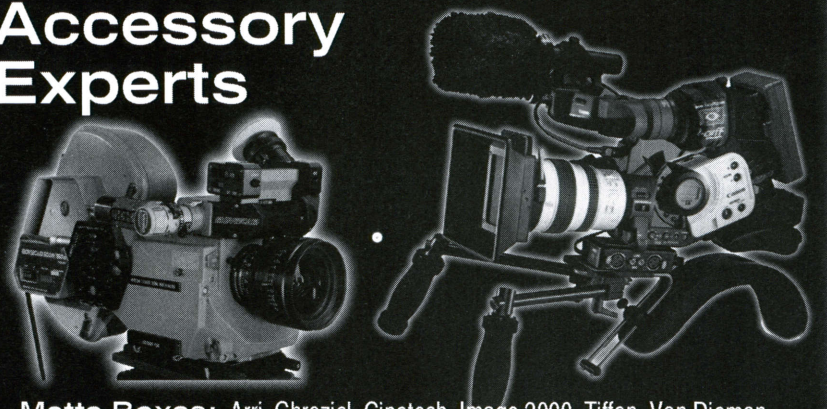

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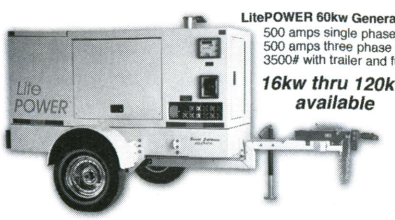

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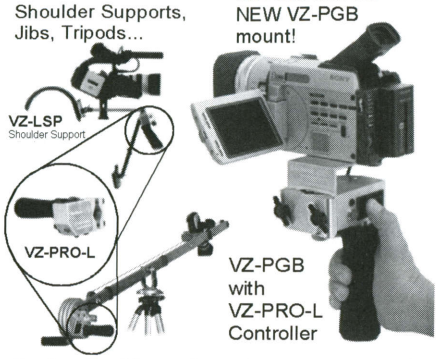

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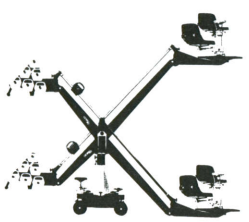

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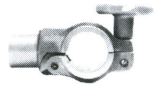

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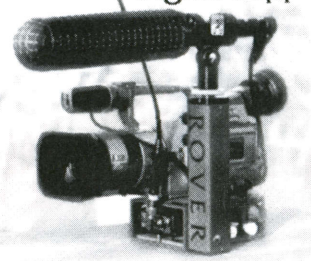

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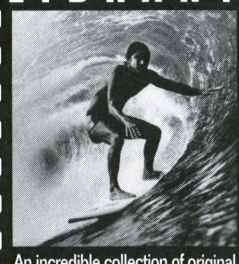

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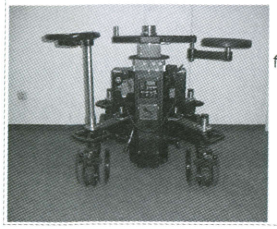

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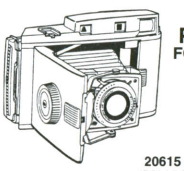

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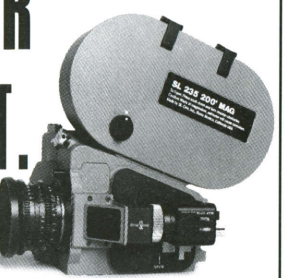

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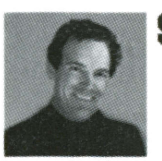

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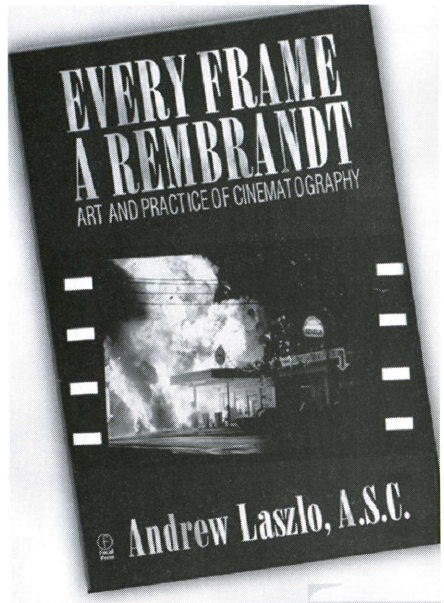

This book examines the art and craft of motion-picture photography through a veteran professional cinematographer's personal experiences on five major motion pictures, each selected to illustrate a particular series of challenges for the photographer.

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ISBN 024080399X : 240pp : 6 x 9.25 In. : 12 color photos : 39 b/w photos : 6 line illustrations :

Softcover : June 2000 :

US$34.95

www.cinematographer.com

Filmmakers' Forum

Digital, Digital Getdown

by John Bailey, ASC

The pop group 'N Sync's lyric from the album *No Strings Attached*, "We can get together naturally on the digital screen," can surely serve as mantra for an emerging wave of e-filmmakers. A friend of mine who teaches cinematography at one of the nation's prestigious film schools recently lamented that his students were resisting all efforts to guide them through the time-honored "Five Cs" of cinematography, as well as the principles of film exposure and sensitometry. They had grown up with auto-focus, auto-exposure video cameras. They saw no need for grounding in an outdated analog (celluloid) technology and were all but refusing to shoot student projects on film. This is an ironic reversal of the mood of a few years ago, when film students couldn't wait to get beyond the first-year mandatory video projects and get their hands on an Arri or an Aaton.

This past year I have found myself thrust into the heat of the digital-video (DV) debate. This is doubly ironic because I have spent my entire career as a "film" person. So, in the interest of full disclosure, I confess that I don't own a video camcorder, digital or analog, or even a digital still camera. But in the spirit of an informed ignorance, I'd like to take you through some preliminary thoughts on this personal odyssey across a digital sea.

Last January I was invited to screen David Hare's *Via Dolorosa* as a special presentation at the Sundance Festival. I had photographed and directed the film of this compelling performance monologue staged at the Booth Theater in New York. Filmed in Super 16, it was, ironically, being screened at Sundance in video projection. Funded by the BBC and the Lincoln Center Theater Group for television presentation, *Via Dolorosa* had not yet found money for a blow-up to 35mm film. I felt more than a little unresolved, because as a "film" person I had never finished a movie only on video, nor had I ever photographed anything on video.

Some weeks earlier and independent of this screening, the film critic Godfrey Cheshire had invited me to participate at Sundance on a panel he would moderate, to discuss "new" (i.e., video) technology. I felt reasonably secure representing the voice of "old media": celluloid film. But I had no idea that fellow panelist Roger Ebert and I were about to fall into the feeding frenzy of the "film is dead" diners. The word "diners" is an apt metaphor. The day before, after screening his first video feature, a noted film director then foreswore celluloid forever and ceremoniously announced that DV would now free filmmakers from "the tyranny of the caterers and the cinematographers." Hmm? I personally have always had the highest regard for caterers.

Seated next to me was a gifted young actor-turned-director who had just made a video feature in less than two weeks, shot at the Chelsea Hotel, Manhattan's timeless iconic hotbed of the avant-garde. This twentysomething auteur piled eagerly into the debate and proceeded to explain that young visual artists would soon wrest control from the studios and a generation of film technicians, whose hidebound methods and smoke-and-mirrors tricks finally had run their course. I admired his conviction and enthusiasm, if not his parochialism. It reminded me of my own heady days at USC, challenging Arthur Knight's industry guests to go out and see how Godard, Malle and Truffaut were revolutionizing film on the streets and in the cafés of Paris. Of course, an even earlier generation of French directors, such as Renoir and Vigo, had also dismissed their elders when they, too, liberated film from the confines of the studio. "Plus ça change...."

Perhaps one of the sidebar benefits of maturity is that of having lived enough history to watch a new generation re-invent the wheel — a better and more efficient wheel, perhaps, but still a wheel. While listening to some of the audience disabuse Roger Ebert for defending film as a still-vital medium and also for extolling Dean Goodhill's promising new film projectors (see *AC* Feb. '00), I quietly decided that maybe the time had come for me to shoot a film on DV. But more of that in a moment.

What intrigues me about the putative, imminent overthrow of film by DV is not just a generation's seeming comfort with video camcorders and firewire computer downloads, but the sense that a new film vocabulary and grammar is being born. The lead for an Anne Thompson-authored article in the August 2000 issue of *Premiere* proclaims that "today's most daring filmmakers are turning their backs on star power, high-tech effects and studio polish. And their raw, stripped-down movies are gripping audiences from Cannes to the American mainstream." In a big nod to cinéma vérité of the Sixties, she labels it "cinema purité."

The moral/metaphysical implications of this new buzzword are found close at hand in the precepts of the Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg film collective called Dogma 95. Admittedly begun as a provocative thumbing-the-nose gesture at traditional filmmaking by traditional filmmakers, it quickly achieved international status with the Academy Award-nominated films *Breaking the Waves* and *Celebration*. As a cinematographer I cannot help but appreciate the irony that the former film was photographed by Robby Müller, who already enjoyed considerable acclaim from his work with Wim Wenders and

Barbet Schroeder, and the latter film was photographed by the classically trained English cinematographer Anthony Dod Mantle, who has become the Raoul Coutard of Dogma 95.

At last year's Venice Film Festival, I had the good fortune to serve on a panel with Dod Mantle. Afterward I expressed to him my interest in shooting a Dogma-style film. "That's great," he said, "but I'd like to do what you do." "What's that?" I asked. With a wink, he said, "Shoot a film in 35mm anamorphic." Well, we bonded immediately and had drinks later that night on the terrace of the Hotel Londra Palace.

At that time I was just becoming acquainted with Dogma 95 films and secured a copy of its 10 commandments, the directives defining its parameters. Strict adherence to its guidelines is required to obtain a Dogma 95 certificate, which is not unlike the *imprimatur* or *nihil obstat* of the Roman Catholic Church. Violation of its precepts demands a public "confession." The strictures of this filmic "purity" seem to me not unlike the Cistercian movement of reductive simplicity that swept the Roman Church in the 12th century or of the revolution of punk culture in the late Seventies that aimed to cleanse the bloated realm of glam rock. If the aim of such movements is to clear away clutter so the faithful or the audience can experience the message more directly, how does this apply to the movies?

It seems to me that the rabid preoccupation of filmmakers, preeminently Hollywood filmmakers, with complex and violent action, rafter-rattling sound and dazzling CGI effects was doomed to give rise to a contrary reaction, especially in Europe, by filmmakers who believe with the conviction of religious zealots that the essence of film is more than a catalogue of its most sophisticated visual and aural tics. In an August 13 *New York Times* article, the estimable critic Philip Lopate wrote about "When Foreign Films Mattered," an elegy to the two-decade period from postwar Italian Neo-Realism to the French New Wave, a period when film audiences believed that cinema could change people, not just entertain them. I think the Dogma 95 movement and its American progeny want to rediscover that energy and mandate.

Which brings us back to video and its youthful exponents. I have to ask myself whether film itself, the medium of celluloid, has somehow become emblematic of the stylistic hubris of Hollywood. Kill the messenger if you don't like the message? Why should this century-old "capture medium" of film, a medium capable of great beauty and subtlety, be declared "dead" by a claque of critics and students who have never even used it? Is DV a new visual conceit created by a generation of computer geeks birthed on interactive video games? Is it a marketing scheme launched by Japanese hardware manufacturers to sell soon-outdated product? Or is it a genuine rebirth of cinema? I don't pretend to have an answer because I don't really understand the underlying ethos, but I do hear the chorus of plaints.

Several months after Sundance, I find myself in intense preproduction on my own first DV feature. Such are the vicissitudes of making movies. The feature is co-authored by Jennifer Jason Leigh and Alan Cumming and co-stars both of them; they will also co-direct. The script, *Anniversary Party*, documents a celebratory gathering of friends hosted by Jennifer and Alan, who portray a couple recently reunited after a six-month separation. The film takes place in and around their home, a classic and tastefully spare Richard Neutra Fifties Hollywood Hills floor-to-ceiling glass box. In the course of an evening of revealing dramatic vignettes, fueled by the drug Ecstasy, everything and everyone comes unglued.

Though they do not want to be bound by the strict dictates of Dogma 95, Jennifer and Alan are convinced that video rather than film will create an environment that will allow the actors "to be" rather than "to act." It is a large ensemble cast of 16, and the twists and turns of the drama are reminiscent of *The Big Chill*, a film of Lawrence Kasdan's that I photographed and that Carol Littleton edited. Carol is also editing this film, marking the first time we have worked together in a decade. It occurs to Carol and me that were *The Big Chill* to be made today, one could make a compelling case for its being made in DV.

Aware of the limited resolving power of video as compared to film, Jennifer, Alan and I decide to shoot in a way that limits the number of masters and wide shots and emphasizes close-ups. On the face of it, this seems to be only common sense, but it makes artistic sense as well. We talk about the extended use of close-ups by Bergman, a director whose entire body of work is really an extended, humane portrait of souls in conflict. One of his greatest films, *Persona*, consists of almost nothing but close-ups.

Von Trier is certainly Bergman's stylistic and thematic soulmate. It was with great curiosity that I began to read a recent cover story in *Res* magazine about von Trier and his new film *Dancer in the Dark*, a DV feature that captured top film and acting honors at this year's Cannes Film Festival. In an interview conducted by Shari Roman, von Trier says that "when I was seven years old, I got a projector, and I asked my uncle [who is a documentary filmmaker] for something to show on this 16mm thing, and he gave me something he had thrown out. This was, by chance, the trial scene from Carl Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, which I must have watched 1,000 times. So I'm brainwashed." He is responding here to the interviewer's observation about his cinematic obsession with "sacrificial female" films. But more importantly, I think, is the fact that *The Passion of Joan of Arc* is a relentless and intense "gaze" at the face of the actress Falconetti, a gaze that makes her iconic, an archetype in glowing black-and-white celluloid. But perhaps these same images on video would be more nakedly human in the probing rawness of the unfiltered video camera. Conversely, one wonders whether Björk's performance in *Dancer in the Dark* would have the same rawness had it been shot on celluloid.

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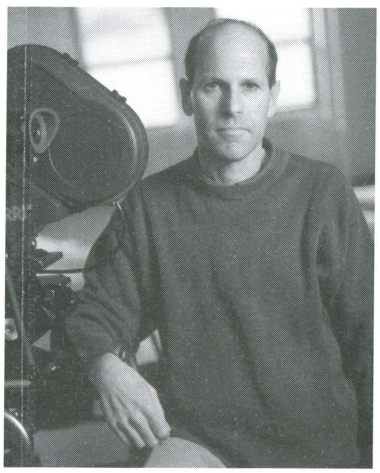
From the Clubhouse

New Members

The Society recently inducted Jon Fauer and Ueli Steiger into its membership ranks.



Jon Fauer has been shooting films since he was 8 years old. He attended Collegiate School in New York and graduated from Dartmouth College with honors in art and film.

Fauer became a camera operator when his mentor, Andrew Laszlo, ASC, needed someone capable of skiing backward while operating a Panaflex camera. After five years as a camera operator, he stepped in to the role of director of photography in 1983 and has notched numerous credits.

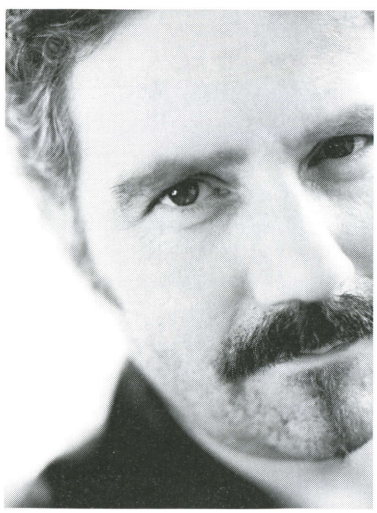
His first major film, *Whitewater*, was commissioned for the U.S. Olympic Team and focuses on the Whitewater Championships in Italy. The award-winning film led to many more documentaries, including *ARRI Close Up*, *Mid-Atlantic* for National Geographic, *18th Century Woman* for A&E, and *Losey on Film* for PBS with director Joseph Losey. His varied background also includes television specials, such as the Emmy-nominated *F.D.R.*, *Traveling Hopefully* and *Godunov, A Portrait;* theatrical shorts, such as *Arriflex 16SR3 Intro* and Coca-Cola's *I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing;* and commercials for an extensive list of clients, including AT&T, Honda, Toyota and Nabisco.

Fauer is also author of the informative cinematography tomes *Arriflex 435 Book*, *Arriflex 16SR3: The Book*, *Arriflex 35 Book* and *Arriflex 16SR Book*.

After studying at the University of Zurich and the London International Film School, **Ueli Steiger** embarked on his film career in the early 1980s, racking up numerous high-profile credits in the process.

His feature credits include Dennis Hopper's *The Hot Spot* (1990) and *Chasers* (1994), Michael Hoffman's *Some Girls* (1989) and *Soapdish* (1991), Cameron Crowe's *Singles* (1991), Frank Oz's *Bowfinger* (1999), Jay Roach's *Austin Powers II: The Spy Who Shagged Me* (1999), and Roland Emmerich's *Godzilla* (1998).

He also did additional photography on Emmerich's alien-invasion epic *Independence Day* in 1996, and second-



unit work on the large-scale finale of *Con Air* in 1997. "In hindsight, that was prepping me for *Godzilla*, and I was ready when the time came," said Steiger in the June 1998 issue of *AC*. "Those jobs gave me the chance to light and shoot big sets and action sequences."

Steiger has photographed two films slated for release this year: Jean-Marie Poiré's *The Visitors* and Stephen Herek's *Metal God*. ■

Filmmakers' Forum —

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Von Trier's films *Breaking the Waves* and *Dancer in the Dark* are insistent and probing studies of women in crisis, woman rather than man as mirror of the human condition. His earlier celluloid films, such as *Zentropa*, are controlled, formal, unemotional. DV seems to encourage him toward a messier, less structured and unhurried style of performance, jump-cut together only by the logic of emotional continuity. For him, video must seem liberating. In *Dancer in the Dark* he operates the camera himself, handheld, stalking his actress like a prey. Depending on your point of view, this insistent authorial style will thrust you squarely into the emotional action or pull you with an alienating vertigo toward the theater's exit sign. At Cannes, both views had vociferous partisans.

I have just completed the principal photography of *Anniversary Party*. It was made in 19 days using lights and a dolly and in a traditional film style. It was photographed with a Sony PAL DSR 500 camera in the DV-cam tape format. My assistant, Matt Moriarty, who had recently made his own DV film, raided a half-dozen video-rental houses to trick out the camera to be used with some of the control elements of a film camera. But a number of scenes were also shot handheld, without lights, faithful to Dogma guidelines.

Obviously, there is much to talk about from my perspective as a film-based cinematographer trying to understand and work in a new medium. For that is what it is. DV will not supersede film, just as photography did not supersede painting. It is a new medium, a partner to film. And in time, it will assert even more stylistic independence. I do hope the two will co-exist amicably and not become the pawns of passionate partisan rhetoric. Otherwise, both media will inevitably suffer. But that is another story, one that I hope to continue in this forum in the near future. ■

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